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O F
T H E M A N N E R
I N W H I C H
T H E P E R S E C U T O R S D I E D.
A T R E A T I S E.

B Y
L. C. F. L A C T A N T I U S.

E D I N B U R G H:

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MDCCLXXXII.

B  L

T O

The RIGHT REVEREND

BEILBY PORTEUS, D. D.

BISHOP of CHESTER,

THIS TRANSLATION

OF *LACTANTIUS*

DE MORTIBUS PERSECUTORUM

IS INSCRIBED.

B Y

THE EDITOR.

P R E F A C E.

IT is a question much agitated among learned men, Whether the treatise de Mortibus Persecutorum ought to be ascribed to L. C. F. Lactantius, the author of the Divine Institutes? Le Nourry [Dissert. in L. Ceciliæ Lib. d. M. P.] has collected various arguments for proving that it ought not; and other writers have furnished some additional arguments on the same side of the question.

My purpose is, to make a fair state of those arguments, to suggest what may be said in answer to them, and to produce the arguments which are generally employed in support of the proposition, That the treatise de Mortibus Persecutorum ought to be ascribed to Lactantius.

1. “ *The only MS. hitherto discovered of*
 “ *the treatise d. M. P. bears this title, in red*
 “ *letters, Lycii Cecilii, &c. not Lucii Cœlii*
 “ *Firmiani Lactantii, &c. The chief atten-*
 “ *tion of copists was bestowed on the titles of*
 “ *their MSS. and therefore, had this title*
 “ *been erroneous, the copist, on revising his*
 “ *transcript, would have corrected it.*” Le
 Nourry, p. 130.

Ans. Le Nourry admits, and indeed how
 could he have denied it, that this copist was
 utterly ignorant of the Latin language, and
 that he was exceedingly careless; so it is vain
 to talk of his attention and care. The first
 word of this title, written in red letters with
 so much attention, and so carefully correct-
 ed, is *Lycii*, a word obviously erroneous:
 hence it appears, that the copist omitted to do
 what Le Nourry pronounces that he must have
 done.

The difference in writing between *Cœlii* and
Cecilii is too inconsiderable to merit observa-
 tion;

tion; and Baluzius remarks, that Lactantius, in some MSS. of his works, is styled L. Cœcilius, and not L. Cœlius. Thus also Bernardinus de Bustis, in the 15th century, quotes Lactantius under the name of Lucius Cœcilius Firmianus. See Menagiana, t. iv. p. 85.

2. “ The treatise d. M. P. would have
 “ borne the name of Firmianus Lactantius,
 “ had it been written by the author of the
 “ Divine Institutes.” p. 132.

Ans. This observation supposes, that in all MSS. the name of the author must be prefixed at full length. A proposition, which maintains the infallibility of title-pages, may seem too extravagant for confutation; but, in fact, several MSS. of Lactantius omit that name by which he is generally known.

Besides, it appears that the copist had not left space sufficient for inserting the name of the author at full length in the illuminated title. This will be obvious to every one who inspects the fac simile of the MS. as published

by Le Nourry himself; and therefore no argument can be drawn from the omission of words which could not have been inserted.

3. “ The style of the treatise d. M. P. is
 “ brief and obscure; whereas the style of Lac-
 “ tantius is copious and clear; and therefore
 “ that treatise cannot be a work of his.”
 p. 134.

Ans. The subject of that treatise is different from the subjects of the other works of Lactantius, and therefore it is not strange that the style also should be different. The style of the Epistles of Cicero is different from the style of his Orations; and yet there is no critic, who, on that account, questions the authenticity either of the Epistles or of the Orations: and as to the obscurities in the treatise d. M. P. they ought to be imputed to the gross ignorance of the transcriber; for whenever the real words of the author can be discovered, he appears a perspicuous, although concise, historian.

4. “ There

4. “ *There are some expressions in the treatise d. M. P. which no classical writer [bonæ Latinitatis auctor] would have used; and therefore it cannot be supposed that Lactantius used them. For example, in c. 2. it is said, that the disciples of Christ ecclesiæ fundamenta miserunt; and in c. 5. that the King of Persia, while insulting over Valerian, mounted his horse, imposito pede super [or supra] dorsum ejus.*” p. 135. 136.

Ans. *If Le Nourry means, that no expression could have been used by a classical writer which does not occur in some one of the few classical writers whose works are still extant, he must also maintain, that, at this moment, we are acquainted with all the classical expressions of which the Latin language was capable. Besides, many phrases, supposed to be not classical, occur in the undoubted works of Lactantius.*

With regard to the particular phrases at which

which Le Nourry, no eminent philologist, takes exception, that of "*ecclesiæ fundamenta miserunt,*" might be justified; for, in Latin, the significations of the verb *mitto* are wonderfully various; and Æl. Spartianus, a contemporary of Lactantius, says, "*post murum missum in Britannia.*" *Vita Severi, Hist. Aug. Script. p. 73.* This example is sufficient to obviate the criticism of Le Nourry. But it is more probable, that, instead of "*miserunt,*" we should read "*immiserunt,*" which is unexceptionable, or "*posuerunt,*" as in Lactantius, *Instit. iv. 20.* or "*demiserunt,*" as in *Q. Curtius, v. 4.* "*triginta pedes in terram fundamenta demissa sunt.*"

Neither is there, in the construction of the Latin language, any thing inconsistent with the phrase "*imponere pedem supra dorsum ejus.*" "*Injicere quempiam supra stercus,*" means, in Ciceronian Latin, "to throw one upon a dunghill;" although, if Cicero's treatise

tise

tise de Divinatione had been lost, and that phrase had occurred in the treatise d. M. P. Le Nourry might have pronounced it unclassical. But J. L. Bunemannus ad Lactant. has produced an example in point from Q. Curtius, ix. 7. "pedem super cervicem jacentis" "imposuit."

5. "The writer d. M. P. speaking of the persecution under the reign of Domitian, avoids every mention of the name of that Emperor. Lactantius would not have expressed himself so indistinctly." p. 135.

Ans. Domitian is sufficiently described, and no judicious rhetorician could have named him in a sentence which concludes thus: "Memoria nominis ejus deleta est." It might be added, that Lactantius, Inst. i. 1. mentions the sufferings of the Christians without naming their persecutors. "Qui adhuc adversus justos in aliis terrarum partibus sæviunt."

6. "The dialogue between Diocletian and Galerius, c. 18. is exceedingly obscure, and
" it

“ it in no sort resembles the style of Lactan-
 “ tius. The speakers ought to have been
 “ marked thus : Galerius said, Diocletian
 “ answered, Galerius replied,” &c. p. 139.

Ans. Here the appeal is to taste, and every reader of taste, who has examined the treatise d. M. P. will judge for himself. Le Nourry thinks that the Dialogue is exceedingly obscure ; others may possibly think that, take it for all in all, it is in clear language, and that if it had been embarrassed with “ he said, and he answered, and he replied,” the nauseous repetition would have detracted much from the elegance of the work, without adding any thing to its authority.

7. “ The treatise d. M. P. was written
 “ about the year 313 of the vulgar æra, and
 “ other treatises, acknowledged to have been
 “ written by Lactantius, are of a later date.
 “ Lactantius is wont to quote his own works,
 “ but he never quotes the treatise d. M. P.
 “ and therefore it is not his.” p. 146.

Ans.

Ans. It does not appear on what occasion Lactantius could have quoted the treatise d. M. P. with propriety. It could not have been in the fifth book of the Institutes, where he treats of the same subject; for that would have introduced unnecessary references or repetitions.

Le Nourry seems not to have been aware of another and more material circumstance. If St Jerom may be credited, a treatise de Persecutione was written by Lactantius: now that treatise is never alluded to in his works, any more than the treatise d. M. P. Are we then to suppose, notwithstanding the authority of St Jerom, that Lactantius wrote no treatise de Persecutione?

The question is embarrassing; but an hypothesis-maker may get rid of it thus: "The
 " treatise de Persecutione was, no doubt, the
 " very last work of Lactantius, and therefore
 " no references to it could have been made in
 " his earlier works; but had it existed, we
 b " should

“ should have seen those earlier works repeatedly quoted in it.”

8. “ This treatise cannot be of Lactantius ; for there are several circumstances in it inconsistent with what contemporary writers have related.” p. 147.

Ans. This is serious indeed ! it overthrows all historical evidence, and lets in universal scepticism. Why might not Lactantius have contradicted contemporary writers ? because he was infallible, or because they were ? But who are the contemporary writers whom the author d. M. P. contradicts ? A panegyrist or two, not so credible as himself ; for he must be a wretched historian indeed whose evidence does not outweigh the evidence of twenty panegyrists.

Perhaps Le Nourry meant, that the author d. M. P. does not always agree with Eusebius. But the discrepancies between those two writers are neither many nor important ; and it is probable that, in some things, the author

d. M. P. was worse informed than Eusebius, and in others better. At least Le Nourry has not shewn that the testimony of Eusebius, when placed against that of the author d. M. P. must always preponderate.

9. “There are improbable circumstances in the treatise d. M. P. and therefore Lactantius was not the author of that work.” p. 147.

Ans. This leads into a wide field.—If any circumstances appear improbable to any critic, the work that contains such circumstances must not be ascribed to Lactantius!

Hereafter there will be an opportunity of examining most of those incredibilities: one of them, by way of specimen, shall be examined at present.

Le Nourry says, that Lactantius would not have affirmed, that Constantine was present at that conference between Diocletian and Galerius, in which they resolved that Maximin Daia should be chosen Cæsar, and yet that he

b 2 accompanied

accompanied Diocletian to the assembly in which that choice was declared; for Constantine, says Le Nourry, would never have submitted to the insult of seeing himself publicly rejected, and another chosen.

Here a wrong inference is drawn from a mistaken fact. The author d. M. P. says, that Constantine “*erat tunc præsens*,” that is, “at court,” or “in Nicomedia,” not that he was present so as to overhear the conference between the two Emperors. My inclinations indeed might lead me to suppose, as Le Nourry does, that Constantine was present; for then Lactantius might have received an account of that conference from an ear-witness; but I must not pervert the sense of the author to serve an hypothesis. Granting, however, that Constantine had overheard the conference, and known its result, that prudence, which always tempered his ambition, would have prevented him from expressing any discontent at the election of Maximin Daia. The office of Tribune
nus

nus primi ordinis was probably an office which required his attendance on the person of the Emperor; and had this Colonel or Captain of the guards presumed to complain, it would have been treason in the eyes of a Prince violent and overbearing like Galerius.

10. “The author d. M. P. says, c. 2. that
 “Christ was crucified *extremis temporibus*
 “Tiberii Cæsaris; but Lactantius says, that
 “Christ was crucified in the fifteenth year of
 “Tiberius, *anno quinto decimo*. See Inst.
 “iv. 10. Now, as Tiberius reigned twenty-
 “two years, an event which happened in the
 “fifteenth year of his reign, could not be
 “said to have happened in the last times of
 “Tiberius, [*extremis temporibus*], and con-
 “sequently the two authors are inconsistent.”
 p. 159.

Ans. Some think, that by *extrema tem-
 pora* is to be understood a period at which Ti-
 berius was far advanced in life; and this no
 doubt suits well enough with the fifteenth year
 of

of his reign, for he was then aged sixty-nine. Supposing, however, that the phrase extrema tempora respected the reign of Tiberius, its inconsistency with what Lactantius says is not obvious. No one ought to require logical precision from an historian; and if the reign of Tiberius were divided into prima, media, et extrema, the fifteenth year might surely be estimated in extremis temporibus Tiberii. Had the author d. M. P. asserted, that Christ was crucified mediis temporibus Tiberii, a like scrupulous calculation might have been opposed to that assertion also.

One thing seems to have escaped the observation of Le Nourry. He argues on the supposition that Lactantius knew or recollected that Tiberius died in the twenty-second year of his reign. But where did Le Nourry learn this? The many books of chronology published in consequence of the invention of printing, enable us moderns to obtain a ready knowledge of eras and dates, so far as it can be obtained.

Very

Very different was the case in ancient times ; and Lactantius might not have remembered, or might not have had any instant opportunity of knowing, that Tiberius reigned twenty-two years. Indeed Lactantius appears, from his Institutes, to have been an inattentive or ill-informed chronologer ; for he confounds the year of the baptism of Christ with the year of his passion.

II. “ *The author d. M. P. says, that Christ suffered POST diem decimum kalend. Aprilis, c. 2. ; but Lactantius says, that he suffered ANTE diem decimum kalend. Aprilis.*” Inst. iv. 10. Two dates would not have been assigned to that event by the same author.” p. 160.

Ans. *Lactantius might at different times have assigned different dates to the crucifixion of Christ. Every author must be sensible, at least I am, that if all his words were critically and captiously scrutinized, he would be detected in contradictions, sometimes in the same work,*

work, and frequently when there chances to be a considerable space between the composition of one work and another. But not to insist on this, or on the uncertainty of arguments drawn from the supposed accuracy of an inaccurate transcriber, the true and satisfactory answer is; and Le Nourry knew it well, that the ambiguous method of computing a Roman day gives reason to believe, that, in common usage, “*post decimum diem*,” and “*ante decimum diem*,” meant the same thing, namely, “the tenth day;” and that the former phrase implied “after the tenth day had begun,” and the latter “before the tenth day was finished.”

12. Fortin remarks, “That the word *utique* is frequently employed by Lactantius, and seldom by the author d. M. P.” *Miscellaneous Observations*, ii. 232.

Ans^w. The remark, although rather of the minutest sort, is just; but the inference from it, that Lactantius did not compose the work

d. M. P. seems erroneous. From accident, or caprice, or from change in taste, an author may in one treatise use a word often, and in others less frequently. Lactantius, when writing on philosophical subjects in a diffuse style, might have often employed the word *utique*; and yet, as the word is rather ornamental than necessary, he might have employed it less frequently, or have omitted it altogether, when writing in a concise style on a subject of history. This is not merely conjecture, it is fact; for when Lactantius introduces narrative into his great work the *Institutes*, he omits this favourite word *utique*. See *Instit.* v. 2. 11.

The chief arguments for proving that Lactantius is the author of the treatise *d. M. P.* shall now be stated.

Lactantius says, that he resided at Nicomedia, a Greek city, when the Christian church was razed. The author of the treatise *d. M. P.* does not say that he himself was in Nicomedia at that time, yet his description of the

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razing

razing of the church is so lively, that one can hardly doubt of his having been an eye-witness to it. Besides, other passages in that treatise introduced occasionally and without affectation, shew the author to have been particularly acquainted with Nicomedia and its neighbourhood.

We know, that Lactantius was a rhetorician, that he taught rhetoric at Nicomedia; but that having few scholars, by reason that Nicomedia was a Greek city, he betook himself to the writing of books. So St Jerom: “*Nicomediæ rhetoricam docuit; at penuriâ discipulorum, ob Græcam videlicet civitatem, ad scribendum se contulit.*” The worst enemies of the author d. M. P. admit that he was a rhetorician, and insult him on that account.

In the only MS. hitherto discovered of the treatise d. M. P. the author is styled Lucius Cecilius [Lycii being confessedly an error for Lucii], in all the MSS. of Lactantius in which his name is written at full length, he

is styled Lucius, and in various MSS. he is styled Lucius Cecilius.

Lactantius had a dear Christian friend named Donatus, and so had the author d. M. P.

Virgil was held in admiration by Lactantius, who calls him, by way of eminence, the Poet, and frequently quotes him, and borrows his phrases. The author d. M. P. from a like predilection for Virgil, introduces several passages of that poet into his narrative; and he not only quotes his verses, but also employs his phrases. This is the more remarkable; because to quote verses, and to employ poetical phrases in an historical composition, may be censured as a vitious mode of writing.

Lactantius, and the author d. M. P. make such frequent use of the ablative absolute, that it seems to border on affectation.

The diligence of critics has assembled a multitude of phrases common to Lactantius and the author d. M. P. A few shall be selected, some

of which are singular enough, and hardly to be met with elsewhere.

“*Justitia*” is used by both authors for “the true religion,” or “Christian faith and practice.” *Inst.* v. 7. 12. &c.; d. M. P. 2.

“*Malæ bestiæ*” for “tyrants and persecutors.” *Inst.* v. 23. d. M. P. 2.

“*Roma*—*manus suas in totum orbem terrâ marique porrexit.*” *Inst.* vii. 15.—“*Alas suas in Orientem Occidentemque porrexit.*” *Epitome*, 51.—“*Ecslesia*—*manus suas in Orientem Occidentemque porrexit.*” d. M. P. 3.

“*Te Providentia summæ Divinitatis ad fastigium principale provexit.*” *Inst.* vii. 26.—“*Quasi hujus rei gratiâ provectus esset ad illud principale fastigium.*” d. M. P. 4.

“*Ut — catenatam mortem cum suis terroribus triumpharet.*” *Inst.* iv. 5.—“*Seculum*”

“culum cum suis terroribus triumphasti.”
d. M. P. 16.

“*Alii suo proprio adversus justos odio.*”
Instit. v. 11.—“*Quidam proprio adversus*
“*Christianos odio.*” d. M. P. 11. *Both pas-*
sages relate to the persecution under the Em-
perors Diocletian and Galerius.

“Regnum per manus filio tradidit.” In-
stit. ii. 4.—“Imperium per manus tradidit.”
d. M. P. 24.

“*Quatenus*” is often used by Lactantius
instead of “*quomodo.*” Instit. i. 21.; iv. 27.;
vii. 6. d. Opificio Dei. 6.—“*Quærebat qua-*
“*tenus se à periculo impendente muniret.*”
d. M. P. 26.

“*Insustentabili dominatione vexabit orbem.*”
Inst. vii. 16.—“*Insustentabili dolore usque*
ad rabiem mentis elatus est.” d. M. P. 49.
The word insustentabilis is exceedingly unu-
sual.

There is one coincidence of expression more
remarkable than any hitherto mentioned. The
author

author d. M. P. 38. in describing the enormities of Maximin Daia, says, “Vincit officium linguæ sceleris magnitudo.” And Lactantius, Instit. vi. 23. uses the very same words. Had the expression been metrical, two authors might possibly have borrowed it from some Poet whose works are not extant; but the expression, however pompous, is prose, and cannot be reduced to any metrical numbers.

Add to all this, that St Jerom, in his Catalogue of Ecclesiastical writers, expressly reckons among the works of Lactantius, a treatise thus described, de Persecutione, lib. i.

Now, supposing Lactantius and the author d. M. P. to have been different persons, let us see what will be the probable hypothesis concerning them.

In the year 303 of the vulgar era, there resided at Nicomedia, a Greek city, two Latin rhetoricians, both of them Christians, and both of them bearing the name of Lucius. And there is no better reason for supposing that
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the one bore the name of Cecilius, than that the other did. Each of them had a beloved Christian friend named Donatus: the one wrote a treatise concerning the persecution, the other, a treatise, in which the last and greatest persecution is minutely described: the style of the one and of the other is superior to the general style of that age in which they lived: equally admirers of Virgil, they delighted in allusions to his works, and they quoted passages from him: in the writings of each there is a frequent and remarkable coincidence of expression, together with an immoderate use of the ablative absolute: one complete sentence, without the variation of a single letter, is to be found in both of them; a sentence not borrowed from any poet, but merely prose, and so uncommon withal, that it is not to be found any where, except in the Institutes of Lactantius and in the treatise d. M. P.

Perhaps it could not be concluded from any of those circumstances taken separately, that
Lactantius

Lactantius wrote the treatise d. M. P. but when all of them are taken together, the improbability that Lactantius was a different person from the author d. M. P. appears great indeed!

Some of the arguments here urged were not known to Le Nourry; and as to those which had come within his knowledge, he touches them in a slight and illogical way. Thus, he says, that two different writers might have quoted Virgil, that they might, by accident, have employed similar phrases, and that, at any rate, it was natural for contemporary authors to express themselves in the common style of their age. Such observations may satisfy a superficial reader, but men of study and discernment will require more precision. When the probability of a fact depends on various circumstances of evidence, it will not follow, because each of them separately considered proves nothing, that all of them taken together prove nothing. If a person should attempt

tempt to shew that two treatises were composed by the same author, merely because verses from Virgil occur in both treatises, his attempt would be ridiculous. But enough has been already said on the subject of the treatise d. M. P. to shew that the merits of the present controversy are not affected by this observation of Le Nourry. Neither does Le Nourry well account for the similarity of style discernible in the works of Lactantius and in the treatise d. M. P. for their style bears small resemblance to any of the other writings of that age.

Le Nourry is much embarrassed with the expression “vincit officium linguæ sceleris magnitudo,” which occurs both in the Institutes of Lactantius and in the treatise d. M. P. At first, he supposes that the expression might have occurred to two different writers; but, as if dissatisfied with his own hypothesis, he adds, p. 353. that the one writer might have borrowed it from the other. As he admits, p. 126. that the author d. M. P. wrote before
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the publication of the Institutes of Lactantius, Le Nourry must suppose Lactantius, whose style he praises exceedingly, to have copied an obscure and inelegant author; and yet he produces no argument whatever in aid of this supposition.

With still less semblance of reason, Lardner supposes that the author d. M. P. borrowed the expression from Lactantius. Credibility, part ii. vol. 7. p. 95. A strange conjecture! that one who wrote in 313 or 314, should have borrowed from a work not published for several years after.

With respect to Donatus, Le Nourry boldly affirms, that the confessor of that name, to whom the author d. M. P. inscribed his treatise, could not have been that Donatus to whom Lactantius inscribed his treatise de Ira Dei. The treatise d. M. P. says he, was written about the year 313, and the treatise de Ira Dei about the year 321. Now, if Lactantius in 313 had celebrated the glorious confession, sufferings,

sufferings; and long imprisonment of Donatus, he would not, in 321, have called the same Donatus, “ in express words, a novice, one “ entangled in the affairs of this world, and “ not sufficiently acquainted with the Chri- “ stian doctrine.” [Expressis verbis, tyro,—*implicitus sæculi negotiis, et Christianâ doctrinâ non satis imbutus.* p. 145.]

It is certain, however strange, that what Le Nourry says on this subject is mere fiction.

This has been shewn by an anonymous critic [supposed to have been M. la Croze] in Journal Littéraire, t. vii. part 1. p. 18. à la Haye, 1715, and by Nicolas de Lestocq, Dean of Amiens, in a dissertation prefixed to the second volume of Lactantii opera by Lenglet du Fresnoy. Those writers justly observe, that not any one of the expressions quoted by Le Nourry is to be found in the treatise de Ira Dei addressed to Donatus; that some of them, indeed, occur in the treatise de Opificio Dei, written before the persecution, and addressed,

not to Donatus, but to Demetrianus, a young student in rhetoric; and, which is very remarkable, that the appellation of “tyro,” said to have been given “expressis verbis” to Donatus, does not occur even in the address to Demetrianus.

Lardner, taking up Le Nourry’s argument, enforces it in a manner somewhat more plausible. “Lactantius,” says he, “does not call “Donatus an illustrious confessor; he even “speaks to him as to a novice, who needed to “be instructed and fortified, lest he should be “misled by the authority of the wise men of “the world.” Credibility, part ii. vol. 7. p. 93. [Quorum error, quia maximus est, et ad evertendum vitæ humanæ statum spectat, coarguendus est a nobis, ne ipse fallaris, impulsus auctoritate hominum, qui se putant esse sapientes. de Ira Dei, c. 1.]

Here Lardner does not, like Le Nourry, say that Lactantius in express words called
Donatus

Donatus a novice, but that he spake to him as to a novice.

Many good and sincere men, and even many of those who are termed experienced Christians, have erred in their notions of the Divine attributes. The warning that Lactantius gave to Donatus is equally well suited to all Christians, whether novices or not ; for all of them are exposed to the assaults of irreligious cavil, and arrogant disputation.

In order to elude the testimony of St Jerom, Le Nourry says, that “ that father speaks of “ a treatise de Persecutione, but the treatise “ in question is de Mortibus Persecutorum.” And Lardner adds, that Honorius of Autun in the 12th century, and Trithemius in the 14th, mention the treatise de Persecutione, but say nothing of the treatise d. M. P.

The evidence of Honorius of Autun and Trithemius is of no moment : they are mere co-witnesses, and they speak on the authority of St Jerom,

Jerom, and not from their own knowledge of the works of Lactantius.

With respect to St Jerom, it will be remarked, that, in the same catalogue, he speaks of Tertullian's treatise de Persecutione, and yet no one doubts that he meant to speak of the treatise de Fuga; and this shews that St Jerom did not observe that scrupulous accuracy of language which some critics look for in authors.

To the treatise in question St Jerom gave the title de Persecutione, the copist prefixed to it the title de Mortibus Persecutorum. Neither the one title nor the other expresses the whole contents of the work, and, originally, it may have had both titles.

Copists appear to have varied the titles of books according to their fancy or caprice. Thus the treatise addressed by Lactantius to Demetrius has, in different MSS. four different titles. 1. de Opificio Dei vel formatione hominis. 2. Opus Mundi ac Opificium Dei. 3. de

3. de Opificio Dei. 4. de Opificio Homi-
nis. Now, supposing that the only MSS. of
it extant at this day were those with the title
de Opificio Hominis, and that St Jerom had
said that Lactantius wrote a treatise de Opi-
ficio Dei, it might have been concluded, with
more plausibility than there is in the argument
of Le Nourry, that the words of St Jerom
were not applicable to the treatise de Opificio
Hominis; and yet that conclusion would have
been utterly erroneous.

N. de Lestocq observes, that in the MSS.
of the library of the King of France, the first
book of the Divine Institutes has this title, de
Falsa Religione, [N^o 1662.]; and this, de
Religione et rebus divinis, [N^o 1663.]; and,
which is more singular still, that the MS.
N^o 1667. has this title, Lucii Cæcilii Firmiani
Lactantii liber incipit adversus Gentes. Here
the name of the author is given at full length,
while the words, Divinæ Institutiones, the
principal part of the title, are omitted. These
examples

examples shew that no conclusion against the identity of a work can be drawn from any variations that copists may have thought fit to make in its title.

After having reviewed the evidence on both sides, I conclude with Baluze, Mosheim, and other eminent critics, that the treatise d. M. P. was written by Lactantius.

There are who think, that it is of no moment whether the work be ascribed to Lactantius, or to an unknown writer contemporary with him. But this opinion seems to have been adopted from indolence of mind, and an aversion to the trouble attending on critical inquiries. The author d. M. P. is the only Roman historian now extant, who, living at the commencement of the fourth century, recorded the events of that period; and it is of moment to be assured, that, so far from being an obscure person, of whom we have no account, he was one whose name and character, and literary accomplishments, are known.

In the beginning of the fourth century there might have lived a Lucius Cæcilius, an honest and zealous Christian, capable of recording the public events of his times, but unacquainted with the court of Diocletian or Galerius ; such a man might have been relied on as to the narrative of public events, but his credibility would have extended no farther.

Lactantius, on the contrary, must have had ample opportunities of information. It is hardly possible to suppose that he was not personally acquainted with the Emperor Constantine while yet a private person during their joint residence at Nicomedia ; and it is admitted, that Constantine, soon after his accession to supreme power, conferred an office of great trust and importance on Lactantius. And if we once suppose Lactantius to have been early acquainted with Constantine, we may account, in a satisfactory manner, for the knowledge which he displays of a variety of secret occurrences at the Imperial court.

E R R A T A.

Pag. lin.

170. 6. for "or" read "nor"

185. 16. for "*eviċtio*" read "*evecċtio*"

223. 13. for "INSTINCTUS." read "IN-
"STINCTU."

O F

THE MANNER IN WHICH

The PERSECUTORS died.

Chap. I.

THE Lord has heard those supplications which you, my best-beloved Donatus, pour forth in his presence all the day long, and the supplications of the rest of our brethren, who, by a glorious confession, have obtained an everlasting crown, the reward of their faith ! Behold, all the adversaries are destroyed, and, tranquillity having been re-established throughout the Roman empire, the late oppressed church arises again, and the temple of God, overthrown by the hands of the wicked, is built with more glory than before. For God has raised up princes to rescind the impious and sanguinary edicts of

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the tyrants, and provide for the welfare of mankind: so that now the cloud of past times is dispelled, and peace and serenity gladden all hearts. And after the furious whirlwind and black tempest, the heavens are now become calm, and the wished-for light has shone forth; and now God, the hearer of prayer, by his divine aid, has lifted his prostrate and afflicted servants from the ground, has brought to an end the united devices of the wicked, and wiped off the tears from the faces of those who mourned. They who insulted over the Divinity, lie low; they who cast down the holy temple, are fallen with more tremendous ruin; and the tormentors of just men have poured out their guilty souls amidst plagues inflicted by Heaven, and amidst deserved tortures. For God delayed to punish them, that, by great and marvellous examples, he might teach posterity, that he alone is God, and that, with fit vengeance, he executes judgement on the proud, the impious, and the persecutors.

Of

Of the end of those men I have thought good to publish a narrative, that all who are afar off, and all who shall arise hereafter, may learn how the Almighty manifested his power and sovereign greatness in rooting out and utterly destroying the enemies of his name. And this will become evident, when I relate *who* were the persecutors of the church from the time of its first constitution, and *what* were the punishments by which the Divine Judge, in his severity, took vengeance on them.

Chap. II.

IN the latter days of the Emperor Tiberius, in the consulship of Ruberius Geminus and Fufius Geminus, and on the tenth of the kalends of April, [23d of March], as I find it written, Jesus Christ was crucified by the Jews. After he had risen again on the third day, he gathered together his

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apostles,

apostles, whom fear, at the time of his being laid hold on, had put to flight; and while he sojourned with them forty days, he opened their hearts, interpreted to them the scripture, which hitherto had been wrapped up in obscurity, ordained and fitted them for the preaching of his word and doctrine, and regulated all things concerning the institutions of the New Testament: and this having been accomplished, a cloud and whirlwind enveloped him, and caught him up from the sight of men unto heaven.

His apostles were at that time eleven in number, to whom were added Matthias, in the room of the traitor Judas, and afterwards Paul. Then were they dispersed throughout all the earth to preach the gospel, as the Lord their master had commanded them; and during twenty-five years, and until the beginning of the reign of the Emperor Nero, they occupied themselves in laying the foundations of the church in every province and city.

city. And while Nero reigned, the Apostle Peter came to Rome, and, through the power of God committed unto him, wrought certain miracles, and, by turning many to the true religion, built up a faithful and stedfast temple unto the Lord. When Nero heard of those things, and observed, that not only in Rome, but in every other place, a great multitude revolted daily from the worship of idols, and, condemning their old ways, went over to the new religion, he, an execrable and pernicious tyrant, sprung forward to raze the heavenly temple, and destroy the true faith. He it was who first persecuted the servants of God; he crucified Peter, and slew Paul: nor did he escape with impunity; for God looked on the affliction of his people; and therefore the tyrant, bereaved of authority, and precipitated from the height of empire, suddenly disappeared, and even the burial-place of that noxious wild beast was no where to be seen.

This

This has led some persons of extravagant imagination to suppose, that, having been conveyed to a distant region, he is still reserved alive ; and to him they apply the Sibylline verses concerning “ the fugitive, who
 “ slew his own mother, being to come from
 “ the uttermost boundaries of the earth ;” as if he who was the first, should also be the last persecutor, and thus prove the forerunner of Antichrist ! But we ought not to believe those, who, affirming that the two prophets Enoch and Elias have been translated into some remote place that they might attend our Lord when he shall come to judgement, also fancy that Nero is to appear hereafter, as the forerunner of the devil, when he shall come to lay waste the earth, and overthrow mankind.

Chap. III.

AFTER an interval of some years from the
 death

death of Nero, there arose another tyrant no less wicked, [Domitian], who, although his government was exceedingly odious, for a very long time oppressed his subjects, and reigned in security; until at length he stretched forth his impious hands against the Lord. Having been instigated by evil dæmons to persecute the righteous people, he was then delivered into the power of his enemies, and suffered due punishment. To be murdered in his own palace was not vengeance ample enough: the very memory of his name was erased. For although he had erected many admirable edifices, and rebuilt the capitol, and left other distinguished marks of his magnificence, yet the senate did so persecute his name, as to leave no remains of his statues, or traces of the inscriptions put up in honour of him; and, by most solemn and severe decrees, it branded him, even after death, with perpetual infamy. Thus, the commands of the tyrant having been rescinded,

ed,

ed, the church was not only restored to her former state, but she shone forth with additional splendor, and became more and more flourishing. And in the times that followed, while many well-deserving princes guided the helm of the Roman empire, the church suffered no violent assaults from her enemies, and she extended her hands unto the east and unto the west, infomuch that now there was not any the most remote corner of the earth to which the divine religion had not penetrated, or any nation, of manners so barbarous, that did not, by being converted to the worship of God, become mild and gentle.

Chap. IV.

THIS long peace, however, was afterwards interrupted. Decius appeared in the world, an accursed wild beast, to afflict the church: and *who* but a bad man would persecute religion?

ligion ? It seems as if he had been raised to sovereign eminence, at once to rage against God, and at once to fall; for, having undertaken an expedition against the Carpi, who had then possessed themselves of Dacia and Moesia, he was suddenly surrounded by the barbarians, and slain, together with great part of his army; nor could he be honoured with the rites of sepulture, but stripped and naked, he lay to be devoured by wild beasts and birds; a fit end for the enemy of God!

Chap. V.

AND presently Valerian also, in a mood alike frantic, lifted up his impious hands to assault God; and, although his time was short, shed much righteous blood. But God punished him in a new and extraordinary manner, that it might be a lesson to future ages, that the adversaries of Heaven always

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receive

receive the just recompense of their iniquities. He, having been made prisoner by the Persians, lost not only that power which he had exercised without moderation, but also the liberty of which he had deprived others; and he wasted the remainder of his days in the vilest condition of slavery: for Saporess, the King of the Persians, who had made him prisoner, whenever he chose to get into his carriage, or to mount on horseback, commanded the Roman to stoop and present his back; then setting his foot on the shoulders of Valerian, he said, with a smile of reproach, “ *This is true, and not what the Romans delineate on board or plaster.*” Valerian lived for a considerable time under the well-merited insults of his conqueror; so that the Roman name remained long the scoff and derision of the barbarians: and this also was added to the severity of his punishment, that, although he had an Emperor for his son, he found no one to revenge his captivity,

tivity, and most abject and servile state; neither indeed was he ever demanded back. Afterward, when he had finished this shameful life under so great dishonour, he was flayed, and his skin, stripped from the flesh, was dyed with vermilion, and placed in the temple of the gods of the barbarians, that the remembrance of a triumph so signal might be perpetuated; and that this spectacle might always be exhibited to our ambassadors, as an admonition to the Romans, that, beholding the spoils of their captived Emperor in a Persian temple, they should not place too great confidence in their own strength.

Now, since God so punished the sacrilegious, is it not strange, that any one should afterward have dared to do, or even to devise, aught against the majesty of the One God, who governs and supports all things!

Chap. VI.

AURELIAN might have recollected the fate of the captived Emperor, yet, being of a nature outrageous and headstrong, he forgot both *his* sin, and its punishment; and, by deeds of cruelty, irritated the divine wrath. He was not, however, permitted to accomplish what he had devised; for just as he began to give a loose to his rage, he was slain. His bloody edicts had not yet reached the more distant provinces, when he himself lay all bloody on the earth at Cænophrurium in Thrace, assassinated by his familiar friends, who had taken up groundless suspicions against him.

Examples of such a nature, and so numerous, ought to have deterred succeeding tyrants: nevertheless they were not only not dismayed, but, in their misdeeds against God, became more bold and presumptuous.

Chap.

Chap. VII.

WHILE Diocletian, that author of ill, and deviser of misery, was ruining all things, he could not withhold his insults, not even against God. This man, by avarice partly, and partly by timid counsels, overturned the Roman empire; for he made choice of three persons to share the government with him; and thus, the empire having been quartered, armies were multiplied, and each of the four princes strove to maintain a much more considerable military force than any sole Emperor had done in times past. There began to be fewer men who paid taxes, than there were who received wages; so that the means of the husbandmen being exhausted by enormous impositions, the farms were abandoned, cultivated grounds became wood-land, and universal dismay prevailed. Besides, the provinces were divided into minute portions, and

and many presidents, and a multitude of inferior officers, lay heavy on each territory, and almost on each city. There were also many stewards of different degrees, and deputies of presidents. Very few civil causes came before them; but there were condemnations daily, and forfeitures frequently inflicted; taxes on numberless commodities, and those not only often repeated, but perpetual, and, in exacting them, intolerable wrongs.

Whatever was laid on for the maintenance of the soldiery might have been endured; but Diocletian, through his insatiable avarice, would never allow the sums of money in his treasury to be diminished: he was constantly heaping together extraordinary aids and free gifts, that his original hoards might remain untouched and inviolable. He also, when by various extortions he had made all things exceedingly dear, attempted, by an ordinance, to limit their prices. Then
much

much blood was shed for the veriest trifles; men were afraid to expose aught to sale, and the scarcity became more excessive and grievous than ever; until in the end, the ordinance, after having proved destructive to multitudes, was, from mere necessity, abrogated. To this there were added, a certain endless passion for building, and, on that account, endless exactions from the provinces, for furnishing wages to labourers and artificers, and supplying carriages, and whatever else was requisite to the works which he projected. *Here* public halls, *there* a circus, *here* a mint, and *there* a workhouse for making implements of war; in one place, an habitation for his Empress, and in another, for his daughter. Presently great part of the city was quitted, and all men removed with their wives and children, as from a town taken by enemies; and when those buildings were completed, to the destruction of whole provinces, he said, “They are not
“ right,

“ right, let them be done on another plan.” Then they were to be pulled down, or altered, to undergo perhaps a future demolition. By such folly was he continually endeavouring to equal Nicomedia with the city Rome in magnificence.

I omit mentioning how many perished on account of their possessions or wealth: for such evils were exceedingly frequent, and, through their frequency, appeared almost lawful. But this was peculiar to him, that whenever he saw a field remarkably well cultivated, or a house of uncommon elegance, a false accusation and a capital punishment were straightway prepared against the proprietor; so that it seemed as if Diocletian could not be guilty of rapine, without also shedding blood.

Chap. VIII.

WHAT was the character of his brother
in

in empire, Maximian, called *Herculius*? Not unlike to that of Diocletian; and indeed, to render their friendship so close and faithful as it was, there must have been in them a sameness of inclinations and purposes, a corresponding will, and unanimity in judgment. Herein alone they were different, that Diocletian was more avaricious and less resolute, and that Maximian, with less avarice, had a bolder spirit, prone not to good, but to evil. For while he possessed Italy, itself the chief seat of empire, and while other very opulent provinces, such as Africa and Spain, were near at hand, he took little care to preserve those treasures which he had such fair opportunities of amassing. Whenever he stood in need of more, the richest senators were presently charged, by suborned evidences, as guilty of aspiring to the empire; so that the chief luminaries of the senate were daily extinguished. And thus the

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treasury,

treasury, delighting in blood, overflowed with ill-gotten wealth.

Add to all this, the incontinency of that pestilent wretch, not only in debauching males, which is hateful and abominable, but also in the violation of the daughters of the principal men of the state : for where-ever he journeyed, virgins were suddenly torn from the presence of their parents. In such enormities he placed his supreme delight ; and to indulge to the utmost his lust and flagitious desires, was, in his judgement, the felicity of his reign.

I pass over Constantius, a prince unlike the others, and worthy to have had the sole government of the empire.

Chap. IX.

BUT the other Maximian, [Galerius], chosen by Diocletian for his son-in-law, was worse, not only than those two princes whom
our

our own times have experienced, but worse than all the bad princes of former days. In this wild beast there dwelt a native barbarity, and a savageness foreign to Roman blood; and no wonder, for his mother was born beyond the Danube, and it was an inroad of the Carpi that obliged her to cross over and take refuge in New Dacia. The form of Galerius corresponded with his manners. Of stature tall, full of flesh, and swollen to a horrible bulk of corpulency: by his speech, gestures, and looks, he made himself a terror to all that came near him. His father-in-law too dreaded him excessively. The cause was this. Narseus, King of the Persians, emulating the example set him by his grandfather Sapore, assembled a great army, and aimed at becoming master of the eastern provinces of the Roman empire. Diocletian, apt to be low-spirited and timorous in every commotion, and fearing a fate like that of Valerian, would not in person encounter

Narfeus ; but he ſent Galerius by the way of Armenia, while he himſelf halted in the eaſtern provinces, and anxiously watched the event. It is a cuſtom amongſt the barbarians, to take every thing that belongs to them into the field. Galerius laid an ambuſh for them, and eaſily overthrew men embarraſſed with the multitude of their followers, and with their baggage. Having put Narfeus to flight, and returned with much ſpoil, his own pride and Diocletian's fears were greatly increaſed. For after this victory he roſe to ſuch a pitch of haughtineſs as to reject the appellation of Cæſar ; and when he heard that appellation in letters addreſſed to him, he cried out, with a ſtern look and terrible voice, “ How long am I to be Cæ-
 “ *ſar* ? ” Then he began to act extravagantly, inſomuch that, as if he had been a ſecond Romulus, he wiſhed to paſs for and to be called the offspring of Mars ; and that he might appear the iſſue of a divinity, he

was willing that his mother Romula should be dishonoured with the name of adulteress. But, not to confound the chronological order of events, I delay the recital of his actions; for indeed afterwards, when Galerius got the title of Emperor, his father-in-law having been divested of the imperial purple, he became altogether outrageous, and of unbounded arrogance.

While, by such a conduct, and with such associates, Diocles, for *that* was the name of Diocletian before he attained sovereignty, occupied himself in subverting the commonweal, there was no evil which his crimes did not deserve; nevertheless he reigned most prosperously, as long as he forebore to defile his hands with the blood of the just; and what cause he had for persecuting them, I come now to explain.

Chap. X.

DIOCLETIAN, as being of a timorous disposition, was a searcher into futurity, and, during his abode in the east, he began to slay victims, that, from their livers, he might obtain a prognostic of events ; and while he sacrificed, some attendants of his, who were Christians, stood by, and they put *the immortal sign* on their foreheads. At this the dæmons were chaced away, and the holy rites interrupted. The soothsayers trembled, unable to investigate the wonted marks on the entrails of the victims. They frequently repeated the sacrifices, as if the former had been unpropitious ; but the victims, slain from time to time, afforded no tokens for divination. At length Tages, the chief of the soothsayers, either from guess or from his own observation, said, “ There are profane persons here, who obstruct the rites.”

Then

Then Diocletian, in furious passion, ordered not only all who were assisting at the holy ceremonies, but also all who resided within the palace, to sacrifice, and in case of their refusal, to be scourged. And further, by letters to the commanding officers, he enjoined, that all soldiers should be forced to the like impiety, under pain of being dismissed the service. Thus far his rage proceeded; but at that season he did nothing more against the law and religion of God. After an interval of some time he went to winter in Bithynia: and presently Galerius Cæsar came thither, inflamed with furious resentment, and purposing to excite the inconsiderate old man to carry on that persecution which he had begun against the Christians. I have learned that the cause of his fury was as follows.

Chap. XI.

THE mother of Galerius, a woman exceedingly superstitious, was a votary of the
gods.

gods of the mountains. Being of such a character, she made sacrifices almost every day, and she feasted her servants on the meat offered to idols : but the Christians of her family would not partake of those entertainments ; and while she feasted with the Gentiles, they continued in fasting and prayer. On this account she conceived ill-will against the Christians, and, by woman-like complaints, instigated her son, no less superstitious than herself, to destroy them. So, during the whole winter, Diocletian and Galerius held councils together, at which no one else assisted ; and it was the universal opinion, that their conferences respected the most momentous affairs of the empire. The old man long opposed the fury of Galerius, and shewed how pernicious it would be to raise disturbances throughout the world, and to shed so much blood ; that the Christians were wont with eagerness to meet death ; and that it would be enough for him to exclude persons of that religion from the court
and

and the army. Yet he could not restrain the madness of that obstinate man. He resolved, therefore, to take the opinion of his friends. Now this was a circumstance in the bad disposition of Diocletian, that whenever he determined to do good, he did it without advice, that the praise might be all his own; but whenever he determined to do ill, which he was sensible would be blamed, he called in many advisers, that his own fault might be imputed to other men: and therefore a few civil magistrates, and a few military commanders, were admitted to give their counsel; and the question was put to them according to priority of rank. Some, through personal ill-will towards the Christians, were of opinion, that they ought to be cut off, as enemies of the gods, and adversaries of the established religious ceremonies. Others thought differently; but having understood the will of Galerius, they, either from dread of displeasing, or from a desire of gratifying

D him,

him, concurred in the opinion given against the Christians. Yet not even then could the Emperor be prevailed upon to yield his assent. He determined above all to consult his gods ; and, to that end, he dispatched a soothsayer to inquire of Apollo at Miletus, whose answer was such as might be expected from an enemy of the divine religion. So Diocletian was drawn over from his purpose. But although he could struggle no longer against his friends, and against Cæsar and Apollo, yet still he attempted to observe such moderation as to command the business to be carried through without bloodshed ; whereas Galerius would have had all persons burnt alive who refused to sacrifice.

Chap. XII.

A FIT and auspicious day was sought out for the accomplishment of this undertaking ; and the festival of the god Terminus, celebrated

brated on the seventh of the kalends of March, [23d February], was chosen, in preference to all others, to terminate, as it were, the Christian religion.

“ That day, the harbinger of death, arose,
 “ First cause of ill, and long enduring woes ;”

of woes which befell not only the Christians, but the whole earth. When that day dawned, in the eighth consulship of Diocletian, and seventh of Maximian, suddenly, while it was yet hardly light, the prefect, together with chief commanders, tribunes, and officers of the treasury, came to the church in Nicomedia, and the gates having been forced open, they searched every where for an image of the divinity. The books of the Holy Scriptures were found, and they were committed to the flames : the utensils and furniture of the church were abandoned to pillage : all was rapine, confusion, tumult. That church, situated on rising ground,

was within view of the palace ; and Diocletian and Galerius stood, as if on a watch-tower, disputing long whether it ought to be set on fire. The sentiment of Diocletian prevailed, who dreaded lest, so great a fire being once kindled, some part of the city might be burnt ; for there were many and large buildings that surrounded the church. Then the pretorian guards came in battle-array, with axes and other iron instruments ; and having been let loose every where, they, in a few hours, levelled that very lofty edifice with the ground.

Chap. XIII.

NEXT day an edict was published, depriving the Christians of all honours and dignities ; ordaining also, that, without any distinction of rank or degree, they should be subjected to tortures, and that every suit at law should be received against them ; while,

on the other hand, they were debarred from being plaintiffs in questions of wrong, adultery, or theft ; and, finally, that they should neither be capable of freedom, nor have right of suffrage. A certain person tore down this edict, and cut it in pieces, improperly indeed, but with high spirit, saying in scorn, “ These are the triumphs of Goths and Sarmatians.” Having been instantly seized and brought to judgement, he was not only tortured, but burnt alive, in the forms of law ; and having displayed admirable patience under sufferings, he was consumed to ashes.

Chap. XIV.

BUT Galerius, not satisfied with the tenor of the edict, sought in another way to gain on the Emperor. That he might urge him to excess of cruelty in persecution, he employed

ployed private emissaries to set the palace on fire ; and some part of it having been burnt, the blame was laid on the Christians, as public enemies ; and the very appellation of *Christian* grew odious on account of that fire. It was said, that the Christians, in concert with the eunuchs, had plotted to destroy the princes ; and that both of the princes had well nigh been burnt alive in their own palace. Diocletian, shrewd and intelligent as he always chose to appear, suspected nothing of the contrivance ; but, inflamed with anger, immediately commanded that all his own domestics should be tortured to force a confession of the plot. He sat on his tribunal, and saw innocent men tormented by fire to make discovery. All magistrates, and all who had superintendency in the imperial palace, obtained special commissions to administer the torture ; and they strove with each other
 who

who should be first in bringing to light the conspiracy. No circumstances, however, of the fact were detected any where; for no one applied the torture to any domestics of Galerius. He himself was ever with Diocletian, constantly urging him, and never allowing the passions of the inconsiderate old man to cool. Then, after an interval of fifteen days, he attempted a second fire; but that was perceived quickly, and extinguished. Still, however, its author remained unknown. On that very day, Galerius, who, in the middle of winter, had prepared for his departure, suddenly hurried out of the city, protesting, that he fled to escape being burnt alive.

Chap. XV.

AND now Diocletian raged, not only against his own domestics, but indiscriminately against all; and he began by forcing his daughter

daughter Valeria, and his wife Prisca, to be polluted by sacrificing. Eunuchs, once the most powerful, and who had chief authority at court and with the Emperor, were slain. Presbyters, and other officers of the church, were seized, without evidence, by witnesses or confession, condemned, and, together with their families, led to execution. In burning alive no distinction of sex or age was regarded: and, because of their great multitude, they were not burnt one after another, but a herd of them were encircled with the same fire; and servants, having mill-stones tied about their necks, were cast into the sea. Nor was the persecution less grievous on the rest of the people of God; for the judges, dispersed through all the temples, sought to compel every one to sacrifice. The prisons were crowded, tortures, hitherto unheard of, were invented, and, lest justice should be inadvertently administered to a Christian, altars were placed in the courts of justice,

hard

hard by the tribunal, that every litigant might offer incense before his cause could be heard. Thus judges were no otherwise approached than divinities. Mandates also had gone to Maximian Herculus, and Constantius, requiring their concurrence in the execution of the edicts ; for in matters even of such mighty importance their opinion was never once asked. Herculus, a person of no merciful temper, yielded ready obedience, and enforced the edicts throughout his dominions of Italy. Constantius, on the other hand, lest he should have seemed to dissent from the injunctions of his superiors, permitted the demolition of churches, mere walls, and capable of being built up again ; but he preserved entire that true temple of God, which is the human body.

Chap. XVI.

THUS was all the earth afflicted ; and
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from

from east to west, except in the territories of Gaul, three ravenous wild beasts continued to rage.

“ Had I a hundred mouths, a hundred tongues,
 “ A voice of brags, and adamantine lungs,
 “ Not half the dreadful scene could I disclose,”

or recount the punishments inflicted by the rulers in every province on religious and innocent men.

But what need of a particular recital of those things, especially to you, my best-beloved Donatus, who, above all others, was exposed to the storm of that violent persecution? for when you had fallen into the hands of the Prefect Flaccinian, no puny murderer, and afterwards of Hierocles, who from a deputy became President of Bithynia, the author and adviser of the persecution, and, last of all, into the hands of his successor Priscillian, you displayed to mankind a pattern of invincible magnanimity. Ha-
 ving

ving been nine times exposed to racks and diversified torments, nine times, by a glorious profession of your faith, you foiled the adversary ; in nine combats you subdued the devil and his chosen soldiers ; and, by nine victories, you triumphed over this world and its terrors. How pleasing the spectacle to God, when he beheld you a conqueror, yoking in your chariot not white horses, or enormous elephants, but those very men who had led captive the nations ! After this sort to lord it over the lords of the earth is triumph indeed ! Now, by your valour were they conquered, when you set at defiance their flagitious edicts, and, through stedfast faith, and the fortitude of your soul, you routed all the vain terrors of tyrannical authority. Against you neither scourges, nor iron claws, nor fire, nor sword, nor various kinds of torture, availed aught ; and no violence could bereave you of your fidelity and persevering resolution. This it is

to be a disciple of God, and this it is to be a foldier of Chrift; a foldier whom no enemy can diflodge, or wolf fnatch, from the heavenly camp; no artifice enfnare, or pain of body fubdue, or torments overthrow. At length, after thofe nine glorious combats, in which the devil was vanquifhed by you, he dared not to enter the lifts again with one, whom, by repeated trials, he had found unconquerable; and he abftained from challenging you any more, left you fhould have laid hold on the garland of victory already ftretched out to you; an unfading garland, which, although you have not at prefent received it, is laid up in the kingdom of the Lord for your virtue and deferts. But let us now return to the courfe of our narrative.

Chap. XVII.

THE wicked plan having been carried into
execution,

execution, Diocletian, whom prosperity had now abandoned, set out instantly for Rome, *there* to celebrate the commencement of the twentieth year of his reign. That solemnity was performed on the twelfth of the kalends of December, [20th November]; and suddenly the Emperor, unable to bear the Roman freedom of speech, peevishly and impatiently burst away from the city. The kalends of January [1st of January] approached, at which day the consulship, for the ninth time, was to be offered to him; yet, rather than continue thirteen days longer in Rome, he chose that his first appearance as consul should be at Ravenna. Having, however, begun his journey in winter, amidst intense cold and incessant rains, he contracted a slight but lingering disease: it harassed him without intermission; so that he was obliged, for the most part, to be carried in a litter. Then, at the close of summer, he made a circuit along the banks of the Danube,

nube, and so came to Nicomedia. His disease had now become more grievous and oppressing; yet he caused himself to be brought out, in order to dedicate that circus, which, at the conclusion of the twentieth year of his reign, he had erected. Immediately he grew so languid and feeble, that prayers for his life were put up to all the gods. Then suddenly, on the ides of December, [13th December], there was heard in the palace sorrow, and weeping, and lamentation, and the courtiers ran to and fro; there was silence throughout the city, and a report went of the death, and even of the burial, of Diocletian: but early on the morrow it was suddenly rumoured, that he still lived: at this the countenance of his domestics and courtiers changed from melancholy to gay. Nevertheless, there were who suspected his death to be kept secret until the arrival of Galerius Cæsar, lest, in the mean while, the soldiery should attempt some change in the government;

government ; and this suspicion grew so universal, that no one would believe the Emperor alive, until, on the kalends of March, [1st March], he appeared in public ; but so wan, his illness having lasted almost a year, as hardly to be known again. The fit of stupor, resembling death, happened on the ides of December ; and although he in some measure recovered, yet he never attained to perfect health again ; for he became disordered in his judgement, being at certain times insane, and at others of sound mind.

Chap. XVIII.

WITHIN a few days Galerius Cæsar arrived, not to congratulate his father-in-law on the re-establishment of his health, but to force him to resign the empire. Already he had urged Maximian Herculus to the like purpose, and, by the alarm of civil wars, terrified the old man into compliance ; and
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he now assailed Diocletian. At first, in gentle and friendly terms, he said, that age and growing infirmities disabled Diocletian for the charge of the commonweal, and that he had need to give himself some repose after his labours. Galerius, in confirmation of his argument, produced the example of Nerva, who laid the weight of empire on Trajan.

But Diocletian made answer, that it was unfit for one who had held a rank, eminent above all others and conspicuous, to sink into the obscurity of a low station; neither indeed was it safe, because, in the course of so long a reign, he must unavoidably have made many enemies: That the case of Nerva was very different: he, after having reigned a single year, felt himself, either from age, or from inexperience in business, unequal to affairs so momentous; and therefore threw aside the helm of government, and returned to that private life in which he
had

had already grown old. But, Diocletian added, that if Galerius wished for the title of Emperor, there was nothing to hinder its being conferred on him and Constantius, as well as on Maximian Herculeus.

Galerius, whose imagination already grasped at the whole empire, saw that little but an unsubstantial name would accrue to him from this proposal; and therefore replied, that the settlement made by Diocletian himself ought to be inviolable; a settlement which provided, that there should be two of higher rank vested with supreme power, and two others, of inferior, to assist them. Easily might concord be preserved between *two* equals, never amongst *four*; that he, if Diocletian would not resign, must consult his own interests, so as to remain no longer in an inferior rank, and the last of that rank; that for fifteen years past he had been confined, as an exile, to Illyricum and the banks of the Danube, perpetually struggling

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against

against barbarous nations, while others, at their ease, governed dominions more extensive than his, and better civilized.

Diocletian already knew, by letters from Maximian Herculus, all that Galerius had spoken at their conference, and also that he was augmenting his army; and now, on hearing his discourse, the spiritless old man burst into tears, and said, “ Be it as you
“ will.”

It remained to chuse *Cæsars* by common consent. “ But,” said Galerius, “ why ask
“ the advice of Maximian and Constantius,
“ since they must needs acquiesce in what-
“ ever we do ?” “ Certainly they will,” replied Diocletian, “ for we must elect their
“ sons.”

Now Maximian Herculus had a son, Maxentius, married to the daughter of Galerius, a man of bad and mischievous dispositions, and so proud and stubborn withal, that he would never pay the wonted obeisance

fance either to his father or father-in-law ; and on that account he was hated by them both. Constantius also had a son, Constantine, a young man of very great worth, and well meriting the high station of *Cæsar*. The distinguished comeliness of his figure, his strict attention to all military duties, his virtuous demeanor and singular affability, had endeared him to the troops, and made him the choice of every individual. He was then at court, having long before been created by Diocletian a tribune of the first order.

“ What is to be done,” said Galerius, “ for *that* Maxentius deserves not the office. “ He who, while yet a private man, has “ treated me with contumely, how will he “ act when once he obtains power ? ” — “ But “ Constantine is amiable, and will so rule, as “ hereafter, in the opinion of mankind, to “ surpass the mild virtues of his father.” — “ Be it so, if my inclinations and judgement “ are to be disregarded. Men ought to be

“ appointed who are at my disposal, who
 “ will dread me, and never do any thing un-
 “ less by my orders.”—“ Whom then shall
 “ we appoint ?”—“ Severus.”—“ How ! that
 “ dancer, that habitual drunkard, who turns
 “ night into day, and day into night ?”—
 “ He deserves the office, for he has appro-
 “ ved himself a faithful paymaster and pur-
 “ veyor of the army ; and indeed I have al-
 “ ready despatched him to receive the purple
 “ from the hands of Maximian.”—“ Well, I
 “ consent ; but whom else do you suggest ?”
 “ —Him,” said Galerius, pointing out Daia,
 a young man, half barbarian. Now Ga-
 lerius had lately bestowed part of his own
 name on that youth, and called him *Maxi-*
min, in like manner as Diocletian formerly
 bestowed on Galerius the name of *Maxi-*
mian, for the omen’s sake, because Maxi-
 mian Herculus had served him with unsha-
 ken fidelity.—“ Who is that you present ?”—
 “ A kinsman of mine.”—“ Alas !” said Dio-
 cletian,

cletian, heaving a deep sigh, “ you do not
 “ propose men fit for the charge of public af-
 “ fairs !” — “ I have tried them.” — “ Then,
 “ do *you* look to it, who are about to assume
 “ the administration of the empire : as for
 “ *me*, while I continued Emperor, long and
 “ diligent have been my labours in provi-
 “ ding for the security of the commonweal ;
 “ and now, should any thing disastrous en-
 “ sue, the blame will not be mine.”

Chap. XIX.

MATTERS having been thus concerted,
 Diocletian and Galerius went in procession
 to publish the nomination of *Cæsars*. Every
 one looked at Constantine ; for there was no
 doubt that the choice would fall on him.
 The troops present, as well as the chief sol-
 diers of the other legions, who had been
 summoned to the solemnity, fixed their eyes
 on Constantine, exulted in the hope of his
 approaching

approaching election, and occupied themselves in prayers for his prosperity. Near three miles from Nicomedia there is an eminence, on the summit of which Galerius formerly received the purple; and *there* a pillar, with the statue of Jupiter, was placed. Thither the procession went. An assembly of the soldiers was called. Diocletian, with tears, harangued them, and said, that he was become infirm, that he needed repose after his fatigues, and that he would resign the empire into hands more vigorous and able, and at the same time appoint new *Cæsars*. The spectators, with the utmost earnestness, waited for the nomination. Suddenly he declared, that the *Cæsars* were Severus and Maximin. The amazement was universal: Constantine stood near in public view, and men began to question amongst themselves, whether his name too had not been changed into *Maximin*; when, in the sight of all, Galerius, stretching back his hand,

hand, put Constantine aside, and drew Daia forward ; and, having divested him of the garb of a private person, set him in the most conspicuous place. All men wondered who he could be, and from whence he came ; but none ventured to interpose, or move objections, so confounded were their minds at the strange and unlooked-for event. Diocletian took off his purple robe, put it on Daia, and resumed his own original name of Diocles. He descended from the tribunal, and passed through Nicomedia in a chariot ; and then this old Emperor, like a veteran soldier freed from military service, was dismissed into his own country ; while Daia, lately taken from the tending of cattle in forests to serve as a common soldier, immediately made one of the life-guard, presently a tribune, and next day *Cæsar*, obtained authority to trample under foot and oppress the empire of the east ; a person ignorant
alike

alike of war and of civil affairs, and from a herdsman become the leader of armies.

Chap. XX.

GALERIUS having effected the expulsion of the two old men, began to consider himself alone as the sovereign of the Roman empire. Necessity had required the appointment of Constantius to the first rank ; but Galerius made small account of one who was of an easy temper, and of health declining and precarious. He looked for the speedy death of Constantius ; and although that prince should recover, it seemed not difficult to force him to put off the imperial purple ; for what else could he do, if pressed by his three colleagues to abdicate ? Galerius had Licinius ever about his person, his old and intimate acquaintance, and his earliest companion in arms, whose counsels he used in the management of all affairs ; yet
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he would not nominate Licinius to the dignity of *Cæsar*, with the title of *son* ; for he purposed to nominate him, in the room of Constantius, to the dignity of *Emperor*, with the title of *brother*, while he himself might hold sovereign authority, and rule over the whole globe with unbounded licence. After that, he meant to have solemnized the *Vicennial* festival, to have conferred on his son Candidianus, then a boy of nine years of age, the office of *Cæsar*, and, in conclusion, to have resigned, as Diocletian had done. And thus, Licinius and Severus being Emperors, and Maximin and Candidianus in the next station of *Cæsars*, he fancied that, environed as it were by an impregnable wall, he should lead an old age of security and peace. Such were his projects ; but God, whom he had made his adversary, frustrated all those imaginations.

Chap. XXI.

HAVING thus attained to the highest power, he bent his mind to afflict that empire into which he had opened his way. It is the manner and practice of the Persians, for the people to yield themselves slaves to their kings, and for the kings to treat their people as slaves. This flagitious man, from the time of his victories over the Persians, was not ashamed incessantly to extol such an institution; and he resolved to establish it in the Roman dominions: and because he could not do this by an express law, he so acted, in imitation of the Persian kings, as to bereave men of their liberties. He first of all degraded those whom he meant to punish, and then, not only were inferior magistrates put to the torture by him, but also the chief men in cities, and persons of the most eminent rank; and this too in matters of little moment,

moment, and in civil questions. Crucifixion was the punishment ready prepared in capital cases, and for lesser crimes, fetters. Matrons of honourable station were dragged into work-houses; and when any man was to be scourged, there were four posts fixed in the ground, and to them he was tied, after a manner unknown in the chastisement of slaves. What shall I say of his apartment for sport, and of his favourite diversions? He kept bears, most resembling himself in fierceness and bulk, whom he had collected together during the course of his reign. As often as he chose to indulge his humour, he ordered some particular bear to be brought in, and men were thrown to that savage animal, rather to be swallowed up than devoured; and when their limbs were torn asunder, he laughed with excessive complacency: nor did he ever sup without being spectator of the effusion of human blood. Men of private station were condemned to

be burnt alive ; and he began this mode of execution by edicts against the Christians, commanding that, after torture and condemnation, they should be burnt at a slow fire. They were fixed to a stake ; and first, a moderate flame was applied to the soles of their feet, until the muscles, contracted by burning, were torn from the bones ; then torches, lighted and put out again, were directed to all the members of their bodies ; so that no part had any exemption. Meanwhile cold water was continually poured on their faces, and their mouths moistened, lest, by reason of their jaws being parched, they should expire. At length they did expire, when, after many hours, the violent heat had consumed their skin, and penetrated into their intestines. The dead carcases were laid on a funeral pile, and wholly burnt ; their bones were gathered, ground to powder, and thrown into the river, or into the sea.

Chap. XXII.

AND now *that* cruelty, which he had learned in torturing the Christians, became habitual, and he exercised it against all men indiscriminately. He was not wont to inflict the slighter sorts of punishment, as to banish, to imprison, or to send criminals to work in the mines; but to burn, to crucify, to expose to wild beasts, were things done daily, and without hesitation. For smaller offences, those of his own household and his stewards were chastised with lances, instead of rods, and, in great offences, to be beheaded was an indulgence shewn to very few; and it seemed as a favour, on account of old services, when one was permitted to die in the easiest manner. But these were slight evils in the government of Galerius, when compared with what follows. For eloquence was extinguished, pleaders cut off, and the learned

learned in the laws either exiled or slain. Useful letters came to be viewed in the same light as magical and forbidden arts; and all who possessed them were trampled upon and execrated, as if they had been hostile to government, and public enemies. Law was dissolved, and unbounded licence permitted to judges; to judges chosen from amongst the soldiery, rude and illiterate men, and let loose upon the provinces, without assessors to guide or controul them.

Chap. XXIII.

BUT that which gave rise to public and universal calamity, was the tax imposed at once on each province and city. Surveyors having been spread abroad, and occupied in a general and severe scrutiny, horrible scenes were exhibited, like the outrages of victorious enemies, and the wretched state of captives. Each spot of ground was measured;

red, vines and fruit-trees numbered, lists taken of animals of every kind, and a capitation-roll made up. In cities, the common people, whether residing within or without the walls, were assembled, the market-places filled with crowds of families, all attended with their children and slaves, the noise of torture and scourges resounded, sons were hung on the rack to force discovery of the effects of their fathers, the most trusty slaves compelled by pain to bear witness against their masters, and wives to bear witness against their husbands. In default of all other evidence, men were tortured to speak against themselves; and no sooner did agony oblige them to acknowledge what they had not, but those imaginary effects were noted down in the lists. Neither youth, nor old age, nor sickness, afforded any exemption. The diseased and the infirm were carried in; the age of each was estimated; and, that the capitation-tax might be enlarged,

years

years were added to the young, and struck off from the old. General lamentation and sorrow prevailed. Whatever, by the laws of war, conquerors had done to the conquered, the like did this man presume to perpetrate against Romans and the subjects of Rome, because his forefathers had been made liable to a like tax imposed by the victorious Trajan, as a penalty on the Dacians for their frequent rebellions. After this, money was levied for each head, as if a price had been paid for liberty to exist; yet full trust was not reposed on the same set of surveyors, but others and others still were sent round to make farther discoveries: and thus the tributes were redoubled, not because the new surveyors made any fresh discoveries, but because they added at pleasure to the former rates, lest they should seem to have been employed to no purpose. Meanwhile the number of animals decreased, and men died; nevertheless taxes were paid even for the

the dead ; so that no one could either live, or cease to live, without being subject to impositions. There remained mendicants alone, from whom nothing could be exacted, and whom their misery and wretchedness secured from ill treatment. But this pious man had compassion on them ; and determining that they should remain no longer in indigence, he caused them all to be assembled, put on board vessels, and sunk in the sea. So merciful was he in making provision that under his administration no man should want ! And thus, while he took effectual measures that none, under the feigned pretext of poverty, should elude the tax, he put to death a multitude of real wretches, in violation of every law of humanity.

Chap. XXIV.

ALREADY the judgement of God approached him, and that season ensued in
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which his fortunes began to droop and to waste away. While occupied in the manner that I have described above, he did not set himself to subvert or expel Constantius, but waited for his death, not imagining, however, that it was so nigh. Constantius, having become exceedingly ill, wrote to Galerius, and requested that his son Constantine might be sent to see him. He had made a like request long before, but in vain; for Galerius meant nothing less than to grant it; on the contrary, he laid repeated snares for the life of that young man, because he durst not use open violence, lest he should stir up civil wars against himself, and incur that which he most dreaded, the hate and resentment of the army. Under pretence of manly exercise and recreation, he made him combat with wild beasts: but this device was frustrated; for the power of God protected Constantine, and, in the very moment of jeopardy, rescued him from the hands

hands of Galerius: At length, Galerius, when he could no longer avoid complying with the request of Constantius, one evening gave Constantine a warrant to depart, and commanded him to set out next morning with the imperial despatches. Galerius meant either to find some pretext for detaining Constantine, or to forward orders to Severus for arresting him on the road. Constantine discerned his purpose; and therefore after supper, when the Emperor was gone to rest, he hastened away, carried off from the principal stages all the horses maintained at the public expence, and escaped. Next day the Emperor, having purposely remained in his bed-chamber until noon, ordered Constantine to be called into his presence; but he learnt that Constantine had set out immediately after supper. Outraged with passion, he ordered horses to be made ready, that Constantine might be pursued and dragged back; and hearing that

all the horses had been carried off from the great road, he could hardly refrain from tears. Meanwhile Constantine, journeying with incredible rapidity, reached his father, who was already about to expire. Constantius recommended his son to the foldiers, delivered the fovereign authority into his hands, and then died, as his wifh had long been, in peace and quiet.

Constantine Augustus, having affumed the government, made it his first care to reftore the Chriftians to the exercife of their worfhip and to their God ; and fo began his adminiftration by re-eftablifhing the holy religion.

Chap. XXV.

SOME few days after, the portrait of Constantine, adorned with laurels, was brought to the pernicious wild beaft, [that, by receiving that fymbol, he might acknowledge

Constantine

Constantine in the quality of *Emperor*]. He hesitated long whether to receive it or not, and he was about to commit both the portrait and its bearer to the flames; but his confidants dissuaded him from a resolution so frantic: they admonished him of the danger, and they represented, that, if Constantine came with an armed force, all the soldiers against whose inclination obscure or unknown *Cæsars* had been created, would acknowledge him, and crowd eagerly to his standard. So Galerius, although with the utmost unwillingness, accepted the portrait, and sent the imperial purple to Constantine, that he might seem of his own accord to have received that prince into partnership of power with him. And now his plans were deranged, and he could not, as he intended formerly, admit Licinius, without exceeding the limited number of Emperors. But *this* he devised, that Severus, who was more advanced in life, should be named *Emperor*,
and

and that Constantine, instead of the title of *Emperor*, to which he had been named, should receive that of *Cæsar* in common with Maximin Daia, and so be degraded from the second place to the fourth.

Chap. XXVI.

THINGS seemed to be arranged in some measure to the satisfaction of Galerius, when another alarm was brought, that his son-in-law Maxentius had been declared *Emperor* at Rome. The cause was this: Galerius having resolved, by permanent taxes, to devour the empire, soared to such extravagance in folly, as not to allow an exemption from that thralldom even to the Roman people. Tax-gatherers, therefore, were appointed to go to Rome, and make out lists of the citizens. Much about the same time Galerius had reduced the pretorian guards; there remained at Rome a few soldiers of
that

that body, who, profiting of the opportunity, put some magistrates to death, and, with the acquiescence of the tumultuary populace, cloathed Maxentius in the imperial purple. Galerius, on receiving this news, was disturbed at the strangeness of the event, but not much dismayed. He hated Maxentius, and he could not bestow on him the dignity of *Cæsar*, already enjoyed by two, [Daia and Constantine]; besides, he thought it enough for him to have once bestowed that dignity against his inclination. So he sent for Severus, exhorted him to regain his dominion and sovereignty, and he put under his command that army which Maximian Herculus had formerly commanded, that he might attack Maxentius at Rome. *There* the soldiers of Maximian had been often times received with every sort of luxurious accommodation; so that they were not only interested to preserve the city, but they also longed to fix their residence in it.

Maxentius

Maxentius well knew the enormity of his own offences ; and although he had, as it were, an hereditary claim to the services of his father's army, and might have hoped to draw it over to himself, yet he reflected, that this consideration might occur to Galerius also, and induce him to leave Severus in Illyricum, and march in person with his own army against Rome. Under such apprehensions, Maxentius sought to protect himself from the danger that hung over him. To his father, who since his abdication resided in Campania, he sent the purple, and saluted him again *Augustus*. Maximian, given to change, eagerly resumed that purple of which he had unwillingly divested himself. Meanwhile Severus marched on, and with his troops approached the walls of the city. Presently the soldiers raised up their ensigns, abandoned Severus, and yielded themselves to Maxentius, against whom they had come. What remained but flight for Severus, thus deserted?

deserted? He was encountered by Maximian, who had resumed the imperial dignity. On this he took refuge in Ravenna, and shut himself up *there* with a few soldiers. But perceiving that he was about to be delivered up, he voluntarily surrendered himself, and restored the purple to him from whom he had received it; and after this he obtained no other grace but that of an easy death; for he was compelled to open his veins, and in that gentle manner expired.

Chap. XXVII.

BUT Maximian, who knew the outrageous temper of Galerius, began to consider, that, fired with rage on hearing of the death of Severus, he would march into Italy, and that possibly he might be joined by Daia, and so bring into the field forces too powerful to be resisted. Having therefore fortified Rome, and made diligent provision for

a defensive war, Maximian went into Gaul, that he might give his younger daughter Fausta in marriage to Constantine, and thus win over that prince to his interest. Meanwhile Galerius assembled his troops, invaded Italy, and advanced towards Rome, resolving to extinguish the senate, and put the whole people to the sword. But he found every thing shut and fortified against him. There was no hope of carrying the place by storm, and to besiege it was an arduous undertaking; for Galerius had not brought with him an army sufficient to invest the walls. Probably, having never seen Rome, he imagined it to be little superior in size to those cities with which he was acquainted. But some of his legions, detesting the wicked enterprise of a father against his son-in-law, and of Romans against Rome, renounced his authority, and carried over their ensigns to the enemy. Already had his remaining foldiers begun to waver, when Galerius, dreading

dreading a fate like that of Severus, and having his haughty spirit broken and humiliated, threw himself at the feet of his soldiers, and continued to beseech them that he might not be delivered to the foe, until, by the promise of mighty largesses, he prevailed on them. Then he retreated from Rome, and fled in great disorder. Easily might he have been cut off in his flight, had any one pursued him, even with a small body of troops. He was aware of his danger, and allowed his soldiers to disperse themselves, and to plunder and destroy far and wide, that if there were any pursuers, they might be deprived of all means of subsistence in a ruined country. So the parts of Italy through which that pestilent band took its course were wasted, all things pillaged, matrons forced, virgins violated, parents and husbands compelled, by torture, to disclose where they had concealed their goods, and their wives and daughters; flocks and herds of cattle

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were

were driven off like spoils taken from barbarians. And thus did he, once a Roman Emperor, but now the ravager of Italy, retire into his own territories, after having afflicted all men indiscriminately with the calamities of war. Long ago indeed, and at the very time of his obtaining sovereign power, he had avowed himself the enemy of the Roman name; and he proposed, that the empire should be called, not the *Roman*, but the *Dacian* empire.

Chap. XXVIII.

AFTER the flight of Galerius, Maximian, having returned from Gaul, held authority in common with his son: but more obedience was yielded to the young man than to the old; for Maxentius had most power, and had been longest in possession of it; and it was to him that Maximian owed on this occasion the imperial dignity. The old man

was impatient at being denied the exercise of uncontrouled sovereignty, and envied his son with a childish spirit of rivalry; and therefore he began to consider how he might expel Maxentius, and resume his ancient dominion. This appeared easy, because the soldiers who deserted Severus had originally served in his own army. He called an assembly of the people of Rome, and of the soldiers, as if he had been to make an harangue on the calamitous situation of public affairs. After having spoken much on that subject, he stretched his hands towards his son, charged him as author of all ills, and prime cause of the calamities of the state, and then tore the purple from his shoulders. Maxentius, thus stripped, leaped headlong from the tribunal, and was received into the arms of the soldiers. Their rage and clamour confounded the unnatural old man, and, like another Tarquin the Proud, he was driven from Rome.

Chap. XXIX.

THEN Maximian returned into Gaul; and after having made some stay in those quarters, he went to Galerius, the enemy of his son, that they might confer together, as he pretended, about the settlement of the commonweal; but his true purpose was, under colour of reconciliation, to find an opportunity of murdering Galerius, and of seizing his share of the empire, instead of his own, from which he had been every where excluded.

Diocles was at the court of Galerius when Maximian arrived; for Galerius, meaning now to invest Licinius with the ensigns of supreme power in the room of Severus, had lately sent for Diocles to be present at the solemnity. So it was performed in presence both of him and of Maximian: and thus
there

there were fix who ruled the empire at one and the fame time.

Now the defigns of Maximian having been frustrated, he took flight, as he had done twice before, and returned into Gaul, with a heart full of wickednefs, and intending, by treacherous devices, to over-reach Conftantine, who was not only his own fon-in-law, but alfo the child of his fon-in-law; and that he might the more fuccefsfully deceive, he laid afide the imperial purple. The Franks had taken up arms : Maximian advised the unfufpecting Conftantine not to lead all his troops againft them; and he faid, that a few foldiers would fuffice to fubdue thofe barbarians. He gave this advice, that an army might be left for him to win over to himfelf, and that Conftantine, by reafon of his fcanty forces, might be overpowered. The young prince believed the advice to be judicious, becaufe given by an aged and experienced commander; and he followed it, becaufe
given.

given by a father-in-law. He marched, leaving the most considerable part of his forces behind. Maximian waited a few days ; and as soon as, by his calculation, Constantine had entered the territory of the barbarians, he suddenly resumed the imperial purple, seized the public treasures, after his wont made ample donatives to the soldiery, and feigned that such disasters had befallen Constantine as soon after befell himself. Constantine was presently informed of those events, and, by marches astonishingly rapid, he flew back with his army. Maximian, not yet prepared to oppose him, was overpowered at unawares, and the soldiers returned to their duty. Maximian had possessed himself of Marseilles, [he fled thither], and shut the gates. Constantine drew nigh, and seeing Maximian on the walls, addressed him in no harsh or hostile language, and demanded, what he meant, and what it was that he wanted, and why he had acted in a way

way so peculiarly unbecoming him ? But Maximian from the walls incessantly uttered abuse and curses against Constantine. Then, of a sudden, the gates on the opposite side having been unbarred, the besiegers were admitted into the city. The rebel Emperor, an unnatural parent, and a perfidious father-in-law, was dragged into the presence of Constantine, heard a *récltal* made of his crimes, was divested of his imperial robe, and, after this reprimand, obtained his life.

Chap. XXX.

MAXIMIAN, having thus forfeited the respect due to an Emperor and a father-in-law, grew impatient at his abased condition, and, emboldened by impunity, formed new plots against Constantine. He addressed himself to his daughter Fausta, and, as well by intreaties, as by the soothing of flattery, solicited her to betray her husband. He pro-

mised to obtain for her a more honourable alliance than that with Constantine ; and he requested her to allow the bed-chamber of the Emperor to be left open, and to be slightly guarded. Fausta undertook to do whatever he asked, and instantly revealed the whole to her husband. A plan was laid for detecting Maximian in the very execution of his crime. They placed a base eunuch to be murdered instead of the Emperor. At the dead of night Maximian arose, and perceived all things to be favourable for his insidious purpose. There were few soldiers on guard, and these too at some distance from the bed-chamber. However, to prevent suspicion, he accosted them, and said, that he had had a dream which he wished to communicate to his son-in-law. He went in armed, slew the eunuch, sprung forth exultingly, and avowed the murder. At that moment Constantine shewed himself on the opposite side with a band of soldiers ; the

dead

dead body was brought out of the bed-chamber; the murderer, taken in the fact, all aghast,

“ Stood like a stone, silent and motionless; ”

while Constantine upbraided him for his impiety and enormous guilt. At last, Maximian obtained leave that the manner of his death should be at his own choice, and he strangled himself.

Thus that mightiest sovereign of Rome, who ruled so long with exceeding glory, and who celebrated his twentieth anniversary, thus that most haughty man had his neck broken, and ended his detestable life by a death base and ignominious.

Chap. XXXI.

FROM Maximian, God, the avenger of religion and of his people, turned his eyes

to Galerius, the author of the accursed persecution, that in his punishment also he might manifest the power of his Majesty. Galerius too was purposing to celebrate his twentieth anniversary; and as, under that pretext, he had, by new taxes payable in gold and silver, oppressed the provinces, so now, that he might recompense them by celebrating the promised festival, he used the like pretext for repeating his oppressions. Who can relate in fit terms the methods used to harass mankind in levying the tax, and especially with regard to corn, and the other fruits of the earth? The officers, or rather the executioners, of all the different magistrates, seized on each individual, and would never let go their hold. No man knew to whom he ought to make payment first. There was no dispensation given to those who had nothing; and they were required, under pain of being variously tortured, instantly to pay, notwithstanding their inability.

inability. Many guards were set round, no breathing time was granted, or, at any season of the year, the least respite from exactions. Different magistrates, or the officers of different magistrates, frequently contended for the right of levying the tax from the same persons. No threshing-floor without a tax-gatherer, no vintage without a watch, and nought left for the sustenance of the husbandman! That food should be snatched from the mouths of those who had earned it by toil, was grievous: the hope, however, of being afterwards relieved, might have made that grievance supportable; but it was necessary for every one who appeared at the anniversary festival, to provide robes of various kinds, and gold and silver besides. And “how [might one have said] shall I furnish myself with those things, oh tyrant void of understanding, if you carry off the whole fruits of my ground, and violently seize its expected produce?”

Thus,

Thus, throughout the dominions of Galerius, men were spoiled of their goods, and all was raked together into the imperial treasury, that the Emperor might be enabled to perform his vow of celebrating a festival, which he was doomed never to celebrate.

Chap. XXXII.

MAXIMIN DAIA was incensed at the nomination of Licinius to the dignity of *Emperor*, and he would no longer be called *Cæsar*, or allow himself to be ranked as third in authority. Galerius, by repeated messages, besought Daia to yield, and to acquiesce in *his* arrangement, to give place to age, and to reverence the gray hairs of Licinius. But Daia became more and more insolent; he urged, that as it was he who first assumed the purple, so, by possession, he had right to priority in rank; and he set at nought the intreaties and the injunctions of Galerius.

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That brute animal was stung to the quick, and bellowed, when the mean creature whom he had made *Cæsar* in expectation of his thorough obsequiousness, forgot the great favour conferred on him, and impiously withstood the requests and will of his benefactor. Galerius, at length, overcome by the obstinacy of Daia, abolished the subordinate title of *Cæsar*, gave to himself and Licinius that of *the Augusti*, and to Daia and Constantine that of *sons of the Augusti*. Daia, some time after, in a letter to Galerius, took occasion to observe, that at the last general muster he had been saluted by his army under the title of *Augustus*. Galerius, vexed and grieved at this, commanded that all the four should have the appellation of *Emperor*.

Chap. XXXIII.

AND now, when Galerius was in the eighteenth year of his reign, God struck him
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with an incurable plague. A malignant ulcer formed itself low down in his secret parts, and spread by degrees. The physicians attempted to eradicate it, and healed up the place affected. But the sore, after having been skinned over, broke out again; a vein burst, and the blood flowed in such quantity as to endanger his life. The blood, however, was stopped, although with difficulty. The physicians had to undertake their operations anew, and at length they cicatrised the wound. In consequence of some slight motion of his body, Galerius received a hurt, and the blood streamed more abundantly than before. He grew emaciated, pallid, and feeble, and the bleeding then stanch'd. The ulcer began to be insensible to the remedies applied, and a gangrene seized all the neighbouring parts. It diffused itself the wider the more the corrupted flesh was cut away, and every thing employed as

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the means of cure, served but to aggravate the disease.

“ The masters of the healing art withdrew.”

Then famous physicians were brought in from all quarters ; but no human means had any success. Apollo and Æsculapius were besought importunately for remedies : Apollo did prescribe, and the distemper augmented. Already approaching to its deadly crisis, it had occupied the lower regions of his body ; his bowels came out, and his whole seat putrified. The luckless physicians, although without hope of overcoming the malady, ceased not to apply fomentations, and administer medicines. The humours having been repelled, the distemper attacked his intestines, and worms were generated in his body. The stench was so foul as to pervade not only the palace, but even the whole city : and no wonder ; for by that time the

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passages

passages from his bladder and bowels, having been devoured by the worms, became indiscriminate, and his body, with intolerable anguish, was dissolved into one mass of corruption.

“ Stung to the soul, he bellowed with the pain,
 “ So roars the wounded bull.” PITT.

They applied warm flesh of animals to the chief seat of the disease, that the warmth might draw out those minute worms; and accordingly, when the dressings were removed, there issued forth an innumerable swarm: nevertheless the prolific disease had hatched swarms much more abundant to prey upon and consume his intestines. Already, through a complication of distempers, the different parts of his body had lost their natural form; the superior part was dry, meagre, and haggard, and his ghastly-looking skin had settled itself deep amongst his bones, while the inferior, distended like bladders,

ders, retained no appearance of joints. These things happened in the course of a complete year; and at length, overcome by calamities, he was obliged to acknowledge God, and he cried aloud in the intervals of raging pain, that he would re-edify the church which he had demolished, and make atonement for his misdeeds; and when he was near his end, he published an edict of the tenor following.

Chap. XXXIV.

“ AMONGST our other regulations for
 “ the permanent advantage of the common-
 “ weal, we have hitherto studied to reduce
 “ all things to a conformity with the an-
 “ cient laws and public discipline of the Ro-
 “ mans.

“ It has been our aim in an especial man-
 “ ner, that the Christians also, who had
 “ abandoned the religion of their forefa-
 “ thers, should return to right opinions.

“ For such wilfulness and folly had, we
 “ know not how, taken possession of them,
 “ that instead of observing those ancient in-
 “ stitutions, which possibly their own fore-
 “ fathers had established, they, through ca-
 “ price, made laws to themselves, and drew
 “ together into different societies many men
 “ of widely different persuasions.

“ After the publication of our edict, or-
 “ daining the Christians to betake themselves
 “ to the observance of the ancient institu-
 “ tions, many of them were subdued through
 “ the fear of danger, and moreover many
 “ of them were exposed to jeopardy : ne-
 “ vertheless because great numbers still per-
 “ sist in their opinions, and because we have
 “ perceived, that at present they neither
 “ pay reverence and due adoration to the
 “ gods, nor yet worship their own God,
 “ therefore we, from our wonted clemency
 “ in bestowing pardon on all, have judged
 “ it fit to extend our indulgence to those
 “ men,

“ men, and to permit them again to be
 “ Christians, and to establish the places of
 “ their religious assemblies; yet so as that
 “ they offend not against good order.

“ By another mandate we purpose to fig-
 “ nify unto magistrates, how they ought
 “ herein to demean themselves.

“ Wherefore it will be the duty of the
 “ Christians, in consequence of this our to-
 “ leration, to pray to their God for our
 “ welfare, and for that of the public, and
 “ for their own; that the commonweal may
 “ continue safe in every quarter, and that
 “ they themselves may live securely in their
 “ habitations.”

Chap. XXXV.

THIS edict was promulgated at Nicome-
 dia on the day preceding the kalends of
 May, [30th of April], in the eighth consul-
 ship of Galerius, and the second of Maxi-
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min Daia. Then, the prison-gates having been thrown open, you, my best beloved Donatus, together with the other confessors for the faith, were set at liberty from a jail, which had been your residence for six years. Galerius, however, did not, by publication of this edict, obtain the divine forgiveness. In a few days after he was consumed by the horrible disease that had brought on an universal putrefaction. Dying, he recommended his wife and son to Licinius, and delivered them over into his hands. This event was known at Nicomedia before the end of the month, [May]. His vicennial anniversary was to have been celebrated on the ensuing kalends of March. [1st March following]

Chap. XXXVI.

DAIA, on receiving this news, hastened with relays of horses from the east, to seize the dominions

dominions of Galerius, and, while Licinius lingered in Europe, to arrogate to himself all the country as far as the narrow seas of Chalcedon. On his entry into Bithynia, he, with the view of acquiring immediate popularity, abolished Galerius's tax, to the great joy of all. Diffension arose between the two Emperors, and almost an open war. They stood on the opposite shores with their armies. Peace, however, and amity were established under certain conditions. Licinius and Daia met on the narrow seas, concluded a treaty, and, in token of friendship, joined hands. Then Daia, believing all things to be in security, returned [to Nicomedia], and was in his new dominions what he had been in Syria and Egypt. First of all, he took away the toleration and general protection granted by Galerius to the Christians, and, for this end, he secretly procured addresses from different cities, requesting, that no Christian church might be built within
their

their walls; and thus he meant to make that, which was his own choice, appear as if extorted from him by importunity. In compliance with those addresses, he introduced a new mode of government in things respecting religion, and for each city he created a High Priest, chosen from among the persons of most distinction. The office of those men was to make daily sacrifices to all their gods, and, with the aid of the former priests, to prevent the Christians from erecting churches, or from worshipping God either publicly or in private; and he authorised them to compel the Christians to sacrifice to idols, and, on their refusal, to bring them before the civil magistrate; and, as if this had not been enough, in every province he established a superintendant priest, one of chief eminence in the state; and he commanded, that all those priests newly instituted should appear in white habits, [that being the most honourable distinction of dress]. And as to
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the Christians, he purposed to follow the course that he had followed in the east, and affecting the shew of clemency, he forbade the slaying of God's servants, but he gave command that they should be mutilated. So the confessors for the faith had their ears and nostrils slit, their hands and feet lopped off, and their eyes dug out of the sockets.

Chap. XXXVII.

WHILE occupied in this plan, he received letters from Constantine which deterred him from proceeding in its execution ; so, for a time, he dissembled his purpose ; nevertheless, any Christian that fell within his power was privily thrown into the sea. Neither did he cease from his custom of sacrificing every day in the palace. It was also an invention of his, to cause all animals used for food to be slaughtered, not by cooks, but by priests at the altars ; so that nothing was ever ser-

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ved

ved up, unless foretasted, consecrated, and sprinkled with wine, according to the rites of Paganism; and whoever was invited to an entertainment must needs have returned from it impure and defiled. In all things else he resembled his preceptor Galerius. For if aught chanced to have been left untouched by Diocles and Maximian, *that* did Daia greedily and shamelessly carry off. And now the granaries of each individual were shut, and all warehouses sealed up, and taxes, not yet due, were levied by anticipation. Hence famine, from neglect of cultivation, and the prices of all things enhanced beyond measure. Herds and flocks were driven from their pasture for the daily sacrifice. By gorging his soldiers with the flesh of sacrifices, he so corrupted them, that they disdained their wonted pittance in corn, and wantonly threw it away. Meanwhile Daia recompensed his body-guards, who were very numerous, with costly raiment and gold medals,

medals, made donatives in silver to the common soldiers and recruits, and bestowed every sort of largesse on the barbarians who served in his army. As to grants of the property of living persons, which he made to his favourites whenever they chose to ask what belonged to another, I know not whether the same thanks might not be due to him that are given to merciful robbers, who spoil without murdering.

Chap. XXXVIII.

BUT *that* which distinguished his character, and in which he transcended all former Emperors, was his desire of debauching women. What else can I call it but a blind and headstrong passion? Yet such epithets feebly express my indignation in reciting his enormities. The magnitude of the guilt overpowers my tongue, and makes it unequal to its office. Eunuchs and pandars made search

every where, and no sooner was any comely face discovered, than husbands and parents were obliged to withdraw. Matrons of quality and virgins were stripped of their robes, and all their limbs were inspected, lest any part should be unworthy of the bed of the Emperor. Whenever a woman resisted, death, by drowning, was inflicted on her: as if, under the reign of this adulterer, chastity had been treason. Some men there were, who beholding the violation of wives whom, for virtue and fidelity, they affectionately loved, could not endure their anguish of mind, and so killed themselves. While this monster ruled, it was singular deformity alone which could shield the honour of any female from his savage desires. At length he introduced a custom, prohibiting marriage, unless with the imperial permission; and he made this an instrument to serve the purposes of his lewdness. After having debauched free-born maidens, he gave them
for

for wives to his slaves. His courtiers also imitated the example of the Emperor, and violated with impunity the beds of their dependants. For who was there to punish such offences? As for the daughters of men of middle rank, any who were inclined took them by force. Ladies of quality, who could not be taken by force, were petitioned for, and obtained from the Emperor by way of free gift: nor could a father oppose this; for, the imperial warrant having been once signed, he had no alternative but to die, or to receive some barbarian as his son-in-law. For hardly was there any person in the life-guard except of those people, who, having been driven from their habitations by the Goths in the twentieth year of Diocletian, yielded themselves to Galerius, and entered into his service. It was ill for humankind, that men, who had fled from the bondage of barbarians, should thus come to lord it over the Romans. Environed by such guards,

Daia oppressed and insulted the eastern empire.

Chap. XXXIX.

Now Daia, in gratifying his libidinous desires, made his own will the standard of right; and therefore he would not refrain from soliciting the widow of Galerius, the Empress Valeria, to whom he had lately given the appellation of mother. After the death of her husband she had repaired to Daia, because she imagined that she might live with more security in his dominions than elsewhere, especially as he was a married man; but the flagitious creature became instantly inflamed with a passion for her. Valeria was still in weeds, the time of her mourning not being yet expired. He sent a message to her, proposing marriage, and offering, on her compliance, to put away his wife. She frankly returned an answer such

as she alone could dare to do : first, that she would not treat of marriage while she was in weeds, and while the ashes of Galerius, *her* husband, and, by adoption, the father of Daia, were yet warm ; next, that he acted impiously, in proposing to divorce a faithful wife to make room for another, whom, in her turn, he would also cast off ; and, lastly, that it was indecent, unexampled, and unlawful, for a woman of her title and dignity to engage a second time in wedlock. This bold answer having been reported to Daia, presently his desires changed into rage and furious resentment. He pronounced sentence of forfeiture against the Princess, seized her goods, removed her attendants, tortured her eunuchs to death, and banished her and her mother Prisca : but he appointed no particular place for her residence while in banishment ; and hence he insultingly expelled her from every abode that she took in the course of her wanderings ; and, to

complete

complete all, he condemned the ladies who enjoyed most of her friendship and confidence, to die on a false accusation of adultery.

Chap. XL.

THERE was a certain matron of high rank, who already had grandchildren by more than one son. Her Valeria loved like a second mother, and Daia suspected that her advice had produced that refusal which Valeria gave to his matrimonial offers; and therefore he charged the President Eratineus to have her put to death in a way that might injure her fame. To her two others, equally noble, were added. One of them who had a daughter, a vestal virgin at Rome, maintained an intercourse by stealth with the banished Valeria. The other, married to a senator, was intimately connected with the Empress. Excellent beauty and virtue
proved

proved the cause of their death. They were dragged to the tribunal, not of an upright judge, but of a robber. Neither indeed was there any accuser, until a certain Jew, one charged with other offences, was induced, through hope of pardon, to give false evidence against the innocent. The equitable and vigilant magistrate conducted him out of the city under a guard, lest the populace should have stoned him. This tragedy was acted at Nicæa. The Jew was ordered to the torture till he should speak as he had been instructed, while the torturers by blows prevented the women from speaking in their own defence. The innocent were condemned to die. Then there arose wailing and lamentation, not only of the senator, who attended on his well-deserving consort, but amongst the spectators also, whom this proceeding, scandalous and unheard of, had brought together; and, to prevent the multitude from violently rescuing the condemn-

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ed persons out of the hands of the executioners, military commanders followed with light infantry and archers. And thus, under a guard of armed soldiers, they were led to punishment. Their domestics having been forced to flee, they would have remained without burial, had not the compassion of friends interred them by stealth. Nor was the promise of pardon made good to the feigned adulterer; for he was fixed to a gibbet, and then he disclosed the whole secret contrivance; and, with his last breath, he protested to all the beholders, that the women died innocent.

Chap. XLI.

BUT the Empress, an exile in some desert region of Syria, secretly informed her father Diocletian of the calamity that had befallen her. He despatched messengers to Daia, requesting that his daughter might be sent to him.

him. He could not prevail. Again and again he intreated; yet she was not sent. At length he employed a relation of his, a military man, high in power and authority, to implore Daia by the remembrance of past favours. This messenger, equally unsuccessful in his negotiation as the others, reported to Diocletian, that his prayers were vain.

Chap. XLII.

AT this time, by command of Constantine, the statues of Maximian Herculus were thrown down, and his portraits removed; and as the two old Emperors were generally delineated in one piece, the portraits of both were removed at the same time. Thus Diocletian lived to see a disgrace which no former Emperor had ever seen, and, under the double load of vexation of spirit and bodily maladies, he resolved to die. Tossing to and fro, with his soul agitated by grief, he could

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neither

neither eat nor take rest. He sighed, groaned, and wept often, and incessantly threw himself into various postures, now on his couch, and now on the ground. So he, who for twenty years was the most prosperous of Emperors, having been cast down into the obscurity of a private station, treated in the most contumelious manner, and compelled to abhor life, become incapable of receiving nourishment, and, worn out with anguish of mind, expired.

Chap. XLIII.

OF the adversaries of God there still remained one, whose overthrow and end I am now to relate.

Daia had entertained jealousy and ill-will against Licinius from the time that the preference was given to him by Galerius, and those sentiments still subsisted, notwithstanding the treaty of peace lately concluded between


between them. When Daia heard that the sister of Constantine was betrothed to Licinius, he apprehended that the two Emperors, by contracting this affinity, meant to league against him; so he privily sent ambassadors to Rome, desiring a friendly alliance with Maxentius: he also wrote to him in terms of cordiality. The ambassadors were received courteously, friendship established, and, in token of it, the effigies of Maxentius and Daia were placed together in public view. Maxentius willingly embraced this, as if it had been an aid from Heaven; for he had already declared war against Constantine, as if to revenge the death of his father Maximian. From this appearance of filial piety a suspicion arose, that the detestable old man had but feigned a quarrel with his son, that he might have an opportunity to destroy his rivals in power, and so make way for himself and his son to possess the whole empire. This conjecture, however, had

had no foundation ; for his true purpose was to have destroyed his son and the others, and then to have reinstated himself and Diocletian in sovereign authority.

Chap. XLIV.

AND now a civil war broke out between Constantine and Maxentius. Although Maxentius kept himself within Rome, because the soothsayers had foretold, that if he went out of it, he should perish, yet he conducted the military operations by able generals. In forces he exceeded his adversary ; for he had not only his father's army, which deserted from Severus, but also his own, which he had lately drawn together out of Mauritania and Italy. They fought, and the troops of Maxentius prevailed. At length Constantine, with steady courage, and a mind prepared for every event, led his whole forces to the neighbourhood of Rome, and encamp-
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ed them opposite to the Milvian bridge. The anniversary of the reign of Maxentius approached, that is, the fixth of the kalends of November, [27th October], and the fifth year of his reign was drawing to an end.

Constantine was directed in a dream, to cause *the heavenly sign* to be delineated on the shields of his foldiers, and so to proceed to battle. He did as he had been commanded, and he marked on their shields the letter X, with a perpendicular line drawn through it, and turned round at the top, thus , being the cypher of CHRIST. Having this sign, his troops stood to arms. The enemies advanced, but without their Emperor, and they crossed the bridge. The armies met, and fought with the utmost exertions of valour, and firmly maintained their ground. In the mean time, a sedition arose at Rome, and Maxentius was reviled as one who had abandoned all concern for the safety of the commonweal; and suddenly, while
he

he exhibited the Circenfian games on the anniversary of his reign, the people cried with one voice, “ Constantine cannot be overcome.” Dismayed at this, Maxentius burst from the assembly, and having called some senators together, ordered the Sibylline books to be searched. In them it was found, that “ on the same day the enemy of the Romans should perish.” Led by this response to the hopes of victory, he went to the field. The bridge in his rear was broken down. At sight of that the battle grew hotter. The hand of the Lord prevailed, and the forces of Maxentius were routed. He fled towards the broken bridge; but the multitude pressing on him, he was driven headlong into the Tiber.

This destructive war being ended, Constantine was acknowledged as Emperor, with great rejoicings, by the senate and people of Rome. And now he came to know the perfidy of Daia; for he found the letters written

ten to Maxentius, and saw the statues and portraits of the two associates which had been set up together. The senate, in reward of the valour of Constantine, decreed to him the title of *Maximus*, [the Greatest], a title which Daia had always arrogated to himself. Daia, when he heard that Constantine was victorious, and Rome freed, expressed as much sorrow as if he himself had been vanquished: but afterwards, when he heard of the decree of the senate, he grew outrageous, avowed enmity towards Constantine, and made his title of *the Greatest* a theme of abuse and raillery.

Chap. XLV.

CONSTANTINE having settled all things at Rome, went to Milan about the beginning of winter. Thither also Licinius came to receive his wife Constantia. When Daia understood that they were busied in solemnizing

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izing the nuptials, he moved out of Syria, in
 the depth of a severe winter, and by forced
 marches, he came into Bithynia with an ar-
 my much impaired: for he lost all his beasts
 of burden, of whatever kind, in consequence
 of excessive rains and snow, miry ways, cold,
 and fatigue. Their carcases, scattered about
 the roads, seemed an emblem of the calami-
 ties of the impending war, and the presage of
 a like destruction that awaited the soldiers.
 Daia did not halt in his own territories; but
 immediately crossed the Thracian Bospho-
 rus, and in a hostile manner approached the
 gates of Bizantium. There was a garrison
 in the city established by Licinius to check
 any invasion that Daia might make. At
 first, Daia attempted to entice the soldiers
 by the promise of donatives, and then, to
 intimidate them by assault and storm. Yet
 neither promises nor force availed aught.
 After eleven days had elapsed, within which
 time Licinius might have learned the state of
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the garrison, the soldiers surrendered, not through treachery, but because they were too weak to make a longer resistance. Then Daia moved on to Heraclea, [otherwise called Perinthus], and, by delays of the like nature before that place, lost some days. And now Licinius, by expeditious marches, had reached Adrianople, but with forces not numerous. Then Daia, having taken Perinthus by capitulation, and remained there for a short space, moved forwards eighteen miles to the *first station*. Here his progress was stopped; for Licinius had already occupied the *second station*, at the distance also of eighteen miles. Licinius, having assembled what forces he could from the neighbouring quarters, advanced towards Daia, rather indeed to retard his operations, than with any purpose of fighting, or hope of victory; for Daia had an army of seventy thousand men, while he himself had scarce thirty thousand; for his soldiers being dis-

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perfected

perſed in various regions, there was not time, on that ſudden emergency, to collect all of them together.

Chap. XLVI.

THE armies thus approaching each other, ſeemed on the eve of a battle. Then Daia made this vow to Jupiter, that, if he obtained victory, he would extinguish, and utterly efface the name of the Chriſtians. And, on the following night, an angel of the Lord ſeemed to ſtand before Licinius while he was aſleep, admoniſhing him to ariſe immediately, and, with his whole army, to put up a prayer to the ſupreme God, and aſſuring him, that by ſo doing he ſhould obtain victory. Licinius fancied that, hearing this, he aroſe, and that his monitor, who was nigh him, directed how he ſhould pray, and in what words. Awaking from ſleep, he ſent for one of his ſecretaries, and dictated theſe

these words exactly as he had heard them.

“ Supreme God, we beseech thee; Holy
 “ God, we beseech thee; unto thee we com-
 “ mend all right, unto thee we commend
 “ our safety, unto thee we commend our
 “ empire. By thee we live, by thee we are
 “ victorious and happy. Supreme Holy God,
 “ hear our prayers; to thee we stretch forth
 “ our arms. Hear, Holy Supreme God.”

Many copies were made of these words, and distributed amongst the principal commanders, who were to teach them to the soldiers under their charge. At this all men took fresh courage, in the confidence that victory had been announced to them from heaven. Licinius resolved to give battle on the kalends of May, [1st May]; for precisely eight years before, Daia had received the dignity of *Cæsar*, and Licinius chose that day, in hopes that Daia might be vanquished on the anniversary of *his* reign, as Maxentius had been on *his*. Daia, however, purposed to
 give

give battle earlier, to fight on the day before
 those kalends, [30th April], and to triumph
 on the anniversary of his reign. Accounts
 came that Daia was in motion ; the soldiers
 of Licinius armed themselves, and advanced.
 A barren and open plain, called *Campus Se-*
renus, lay between the two armies. They
 were now in sight of one another. The sol-
 diers of Licinius placed their shields on the
 ground, took off their helmets, and, fol-
 lowing the example of their leaders, stretch-
 ed forth their hands towards heaven. Then
 the Emperor uttered the prayer, and they
 all repeated it after him. The host, doom-
 ed to speedy destruction, heard the murmur
 of the prayers of their adversaries. And
 now, the ceremony having been thrice per-
 formed, the soldiers of Licinius became full
 of courage, buckled on their helmets again,
 and resumed their shields. The two Empe-
 rors advanced to a conference ; but Daia
 could not be brought to peace ; for he held
Licinius

Licinius in contempt, and imagined that the soldiers would presently abandon an Emperor parsimonious in his donatives, and enter into the service of one liberal even to profusion. And indeed it was on this notion that he began the war. He looked for the voluntary surrender of the armies of Licinius; and, thus reinforced, he meant forthwith to have attacked Constantine.

Chap. XLVII.

So the two armies drew nigh; the trumpets gave the signal; the military ensigns advanced; the troops of Licinius charged. But the enemies, panic-struck, could neither draw their swords, nor yet throw their javelins. Daia went about, and, alternately by intreaties and promises, attempted to seduce the soldiers of Licinius. But he was not hearkened to in any quarter, and they drove him back. Then were the troops of Daia slaughtered,

slaughtered, none making resistance; and such numerous legions, and forces so mighty, were mowed down by an inferior enemy. No one called to mind his reputation, or former valour, or the honourable rewards which had been conferred on him. The supreme God did so place their necks under the sword of their foes, that they seemed to have entered the field, not as combatants, but as men devoted to death. After great numbers had fallen, Daia perceived that every thing went contrary to his hopes; and therefore he threw aside the purple, and having put on the habit of a slave, hastened cross the Thracian Bosphorus. One half of his army perished in battle, and the rest either surrendered to the victor or fled; for now that the Emperor himself had deserted, there seemed to be no shame in desertion. Before the expiration of the kalends of May, Daia arrived at Nicomedia, although distant one hundred and sixty miles from the field of battle.

battle. So in the space of one day and two nights he performed that journey. Having hurried away with his children and wife, and a few officers of his court, he went towards Syria ; but having been joined by some troops from those quarters, and having collected together a part of his fugitive forces, he halted in Cappadocia, and then he resumed the imperial garb.

Chap. XLVIII.

NOT many days after the victory, Lici-
 nius having received part of the soldiers of
 Daia into his service, and properly distribu-
 ted them, transported his army into Bithynia,
 and having made his entry into Nicomedia,
 he returned thanks to God, through whose
 aid he had overcome ; and on the ides of
 June, [13th June], while he and Constan-
 tine were consuls for the third time, he com-
 manded the following edict for the restora-
 P tion

tion of the church, directed to the president of the province, to be promulgated.

“ When we, Constantine and Licinius,
 “ Emperors, had an interview at Milan, and
 “ conferred together with respect to the
 “ good and security of the commonweal, it
 “ seemed to us, that amongst those things
 “ that are profitable to mankind in general,
 “ the reverence paid to the Divinity merited
 “ our first and chief attention, and that it
 “ was proper that the Christians, and all
 “ others, should have liberty to follow that
 “ mode of religion which to each of them
 “ appeared best; so that that God, who is
 “ seated in heaven, might be benign and
 “ propitious to us, and to every one under
 “ our government; and therefore we jud-
 “ ged it a salutary measure, and one highly
 “ consonant to right reason, that no man
 “ should be denied leave of attaching him-
 “ self to the rites of the Christians, or to
 “ whatever

“ whatever other religion his mind directed
 “ him, that thus the Supreme Divinity, to
 “ whose worship we freely devote ourselves,
 “ might continue to vouchsafe his favour
 “ and beneficence to us. And accordingly
 “ we give you to know, that without re-
 “ gard to any provisos in our former or-
 “ ders to you concerning the Christians, all
 “ who chuse that religion are to be permit-
 “ ted, freely and absolutely, to remain in it,
 “ and not to be disturbed any ways, or mo-
 “ lested. And we thought fit to be thus spe-
 “ cial in the things committed to your
 “ charge, that you might understand, that
 “ the indulgence which we have granted in
 “ matters of religion to the Christians is
 “ ample and unconditional, and perceive,
 “ at the same time, that the open and free
 “ exercise of their respective religions is
 “ granted to all others, as well as to the
 “ Christians : for it befits the well-ordered
 “ state and the tranquillity of our times, that

“ each individual be allowed, according to
 “ his own choice, to worship the Divinity ;
 “ and we mean not to derogate aught from
 “ the honour due to any religion or its vo-
 “ taries. Moreover, with respect to the Chri-
 “ stians, we formerly gave certain orders
 “ concerning the places appropriated for
 “ their religious assemblies ; but now we will,
 “ that all persons who have purchased such
 “ places, either from our exchequer, or
 “ from any one else, do restore them to the
 “ Christians, without money demanded or
 “ price claimed, and that this be performed
 “ peremptorily and unambiguously ; and we
 “ will also, that they who have obtained any
 “ right to such places by form of gift, do
 “ forthwith restore them to the Christians :
 “ reserving always to such persons, who
 “ have either purchased for a price, or gra-
 “ tuitously acquired them, to make applica-
 “ tion to the judge of the district, if they
 “ look on themselves as intitled to any equi-
 “ valent

“ valent from our beneficence.—All those
 “ places are, by your intervention, to be
 “ immediately restored to the Christians.
 “ And because it appears, that besides the
 “ places appropriated to religious worship,
 “ the Christians did possess other places,
 “ which belonged not to individuals, but to
 “ their society in general, that is, to their
 “ churches, we comprehend all such within
 “ the regulation aforesaid, and we will that
 “ you cause them all to be restored to the
 “ society or churches, and *that* without he-
 “ sitation or controversy; provided always,
 “ that the persons making restitution with-
 “ out a price paid, shall be at liberty to seek
 “ indemnification from our bounty. In fur-
 “ thering all which things for the behoof of
 “ the Christians, you are to use your utmost
 “ diligence, to the end that our orders be
 “ speedily obeyed, and our gracious purpose
 “ in securing the public tranquillity promo-
 “ ted. So shall that divine favour which,
 “ in

“ in affairs of the mightiest importance, we
 “ have already experienced, continue to give
 “ success to us, and, in our successes, make
 “ the commonweal happy. And that the
 “ tenor of this our gracious ordinance may
 “ be made known unto all, we will that you
 “ cause it, by your authority, to be publish-
 “ ed every where.”

Licinius having issued this ordinance, made
 an harangue, in which he exhorted the Chri-
 stians to rebuild their religious edifices.

And thus, from the overthrow of the
 church until its restoration, there was a space
 of ten years and about four months.

Chap. XLIX.

WHILE Licinius pursued with his army,
 the fugitive tyrant retreated, and again oc-
 cupied the passes of Mount Taurus; and
 there, by erecting parapets and towers, at-
 tempted

tempted to stop the march of Licinius. But the victorious troops, by an attack made on the right, broke through all obstacles, and Daia at length fled to Tarsus. *There*, being hard pressed both by sea and land, he despaired of finding any place for refuge; and, in the anguish and dismay of his mind, he sought death as the only remedy of those calamities that God had heaped on him. But first he gorged himself with food, and large draughts of wine, as those are wont who believe that they eat and drink for the last time; and so he swallowed poison. However, the force of the poison, repelled by his full stomach, could not immediately operate, but it produced a grievous disease resembling the pestilence; and his life was prolonged only that his sufferings might be more severe. And now the poison began to rage, and to burn up every thing within him, so that he was driven to distraction with the intolerable pain; and during a fit of
of

of phrenzy, which lasted four days, he gathered handfuls of earth, and greedily devoured it. Having undergone various and excruciating torments, he dashed his forehead against the wall, and his eyes started out of their sockets. And now, become blind, he imagined that he saw God, with his servants arrayed in white robes, sitting in judgement on him. He roared out as men on the rack are wont, and exclaimed, that not he, but others were guilty. In the end, as if he had been racked into confession, he acknowledged his own guilt, and lamentably implored Christ to have mercy upon him. Then amidst groans, like those of one burnt alive, did he breath out his guilty soul in the most horrible kind of death.

Chap. L.

THUS did God subdue all those who persecuted his name, so that neither root nor
branch

branch of them remained : for Licinius, as soon as he was established in sovereign authority, commanded that Valeria should be put to death. Daia, although exasperated against her, never ventured to do this, not even after his discomfiture and flight, and when he knew that his end approached. Licinius commanded that Candidianus also should be put to death. He was the son of Galerius by a concubine, and Valeria, having no children, had adopted him. On the news of the death of Daia, she came in disguise to the court of Licinius, anxious to observe what might befall Candidianus. The youth, presenting himself at Nicomedia, had an outward shew of honour paid to him, and, while he suspected no harm, was killed. Hearing of this catastrophe, Valeria immediately fled. The Emperor Severus left a son, Severianus, arrived at man's estate, who accompanied Daia in his flight from the field of battle. Licinius caused him to be con-

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demned

demned and executed, under the pretence, that, on the death of Daia, he had intentions of assuming the imperial purple. Long before this time, Candidianus and Severianus, apprehending evil from Licinius, had chosen to remain with Daia ; while Valeria favoured Licinius, and was willing to bestow on him, that which she had denied to Daia, all rights accruing to her as the widow of Galerius. Licinius also put to death Maximus, the son of Daia, a boy eight years old, and a daughter of Daia, who was seven years old, and had been betrothed to Candidianus. But before their death, their mother had been thrown into the Orontes, in which river she herself had frequently commanded chaste women to be drowned. So, by the unerring and just judgement of God, all the impious received according to the deeds that they had done.

Chap. LI.

VALERIA too, who for fifteen months had wandered under a mean garb from province to province, was at length discovered in Theſſalonica, was apprehended, together with her mother Priſca, and ſuffered capital puniſhment. Both the ladies were conducted to execution : A fall from grandeur which moved the pity of the multitude of beholders that the ſtrange ſight had gathered together ! They were beheaded, and their bodies caſt into the ſea. Thus the chaſte demeanor of Valeria, and the high rank of her and her mother, proved fatal to both of them.

Chap. LII.

I RELATE all thoſe things on the authority of well-informed perſons, and I thought

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it

it proper to commit them to writing exactly as they happened, lest the memory of events so important should perish, and lest any future Historian of the Persecutors should corrupt the truth, either by suppressing their offences against God, or the judgement of God against them. To his everlasting mercy ought we to render thanks, that, having at length looked on the earth, he deigned to collect again and to restore his flock, partly laid waste by ravenous wolves, and partly scattered abroad, and to extirpate those noxious wild beasts who had trod down its pastures, and destroyed its resting places. Where now are the surnames of the *Jovii* and the *Herculii*, once so glorious and renowned amongst the nations; surnames insolently assumed at first by Diocles and Maximian, and afterwards transferred to their successors ! The Lord has blotted them out, and erased them from the earth. Let us, therefore, with exultation celebrate the triumphs

triumphs of God, and often times with praises make mention of his victory: let us in our prayers, by night and by day, beseech him to confirm for ever that peace, which, after a warfare of ten years, he has bestowed on his own; and do you above all others, my best-beloved Donatus, who so well deserve to be heard, implore the Lord, that it would please him propitiously and mercifully to continue his pity towards his servants, to protect his people from the machinations and assaults of the devil, and to guard the now flourishing churches in perpetual felicity.

NOTES

NOTES and ILLUSTRATIONS.

Chap. I.

P. 1. l. 7. "All the adversaries are destroyed." It is generally supposed that the MS. has, "*ecce addetur* his omnibus adversarius;" but in the engraven *fac simile*, which Lenglet du Fresnoy published, *Lactant. Oper. ii. 179.* there is nothing that can be read "*addetur.*" It has "*addæ,*" very plainly written, and the rest must be supplied by imagination. "*Adversarius*" is not *there.* The word is "*adversarus,*" which, more probably, means "*adversariis*" than "*adversarius.*" The supposed word "*addetur*" is unintelligible; and hence various emendations have been proposed. "*Arce-*" "*tur,*" *Boherell.* "*Deditur,*" or "*tradi-*" "*tur,*" *Tollius.* "*Abditur,*" *Bauldri*; who
fancies

fancies that Lactantius alludes to *Revel.* c. xx. v. 1.—3. “Adteritur,” *Coteler* and *Toinard*. “Excidetur,” *Gale*. An anonymous critic, in the *Miscellaneous Observations* of Jortin, reads, “Ecce autem deletis omnibus adversariis.” And I have been advised to follow that emendation. Perhaps “ecce *adactis* [brought under] omnibus adversariis,” may be considered as no improbable reading.

P. 1. l. 11. “The temple of God, formerly overthrown.” This seems to allude, in its primary sense at least, to the destruction of the church at Nicomedia, related in c. xii. *d. M. P.*; but possibly it may have a reference also to the body of the Christian people, termed metaphorically “the temple of God.”

P. 1. l. 13. “God has raised up princes.” This treatise was written before autumn 314, and while Licinius remained in amity with Constantine, and affected to favour the Christians.

P. 2. l. 21. “With fit vengeance,” read,
“With

“ With late, indeed, but suitable severity.” The MS. has [servit [l. serius] quidem, sed graviter et dignè.] Le Nourry restored those words which Baluze had overlooked, and which, of consequence, all the editors who copied from him omitted. The words are of great moment; because Lactantius, *Instit.* i. 1. delivers the very same opinion, in words not dissimilar. “ Nam malis qui adhuc adversus justos in aliis terrarum partibus faciunt, quanto *serius*, tanto vehementius, idem Omnipotens mercedem sceleris exsolvet.” This may be added to the numerous coincidences of thought and expression which attentive readers have discerned in Lactantius, and the author *d. M. P.*

Chap. II.

P. 3. l. 17. “ I find it written.” This opinion was entertained by many of the ancient Christians, and particularly it is mentioned by Tertullian, from whom Lactantius might have taken it. Lactantius, *Instit.* iv. 10.

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says

says the same thing; and he justly observes, that the *Gemini* were consuls in the 15th year of Tiberius.

Knowing this, he might have seen that he assigned a wrong year for the crucifixion of Christ. It is said, *Luke*, iii. 1. that John the Baptist began to preach in the 15th year of Tiberius; and it is impossible that Christ could have been crucified at the time of the celebration of the passover in that year. The preaching, imprisonment, and death of John the Baptist, and all the events attending the ministry of Christ, could not have happened within a space of three months.

P. 4. l. 10. "A whirlwind." [*procella nubis.*] To the same purpose, *Instit.* iv. 22. "Circumfudit se repente nubes." This, as has been remarked by the critics, is not altogether the language of Scripture. See *Mark*, xvi. 19.; *Luke*, xxiv. 51.; *Acts*, i. 9.

P. 4. l. 14. "Matthias and Paul." This is incorrect; for Paul was not chosen by the eleven,

eleven, nor did he come in the place of Judas Iscariot.

P. 5. l. 1. "While Nero reigned." Until the discovery of the MS. *d. M. P.* it was asserted by the Roman-Catholic writers, that Peter sat for twenty-five years in the see of Rome. The words of Baronius, in particular, are: "Omnium testimonio *certum exploratumque* habetur, jam anno secundo Claudii Augusti Petrum, Apostolorum Principem, venisse Romam." The treatise *d. M. P.* has contributed to detect many vulgar errors. The later Roman-Catholic writers, well pleased at having obtained an additional and ancient testimony of Peter having been at Rome, seem willing that his long residence in that city should be controverted without any impeachment of the faith.

P. 5. l. 6. "When Nero heard of those things." Every one knows that Tacitus ascribes the persecution of the Christians to the wicked policy of Nero, after the burning

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of

of Rome. Suetonius mentions the persecution, but does not connect it with the fire; and Dion Cassius, as we have him in his abridger Xiphiline, mentions the fire, but says nothing of the persecution: so that we ought to have recourse to the testimony of Tacitus, as the fullest and most distinct of any.

Nero might have had various reasons for destroying the Christians, and there is nothing impossible in what Lactantius relates; yet his story has much the air of a popular conclusion rashly drawn from the circumstance of unmerited persecution. For Nero, although he had heard of the miracles of Peter, would never have disclosed to the world, that he persecuted the Christians on account of those miracles.

Here it may be fit to make an observation on the testimony of Tacitus. He says, that there was a *huge multitude* of Christians condemned by Nero. [Multitudo ingens.] Tacitus has been supposed an historian to whom credit

credit might be given with respect to Roman affairs, and transactions in the capital of the empire. But, *stat sua cuique dies* ; every author has his day of celebrity and credit : for we have been lately told, “ That we
 “ should interpret with *candid allowance* the
 “ *vague expressions* of Tacitus, when he *ex-*
 “ *aggerates the crowds of deluded fanatics,*
 “ who had forsaken the established worship
 “ of the gods.” *Gibbon*, i. 608. It seems that the expressions in Tacitus are *vague* ; and I acknowledge that he has not given a list of casualties, mentioning, after the form of a weekly register, that so many Christians were torn in pieces, so many crucified, and so many burnt alive ; but he has said, “ That
 “ when day failed, they were burnt to serve
 “ as lamps during the darkness of night.” [Ut ubi defecisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis urerentur.] This, I presume, implies, that the day sufficed not for the execution of the Christians, and that their flaming bodies
 afforded

afforded decent illuminations to the capital during the obscurity of night.

The reason assigned for interpreting the *vague expressions* and *exaggerations* of Tacitus with *candid allowance*, is exceedingly singular. “ Livy says, xxxix. 13. 15. 16. 17. “ That after the Bacchanals had awakened “ the severity of the senate, it was likewise “ apprehended, that a very great multitude, “ as it were *another people*, had been initiated into those abhorred mysteries. A “ more careful inquiry *soon* demonstrated, “ that the offenders did not exceed *seven thousand*.” It is not obvious what connection this has with the *multitudo ingens* of Christians that suffered under Nero. At the first discovery of the Bacchanals, the public apprehensions might have exaggerated the number of the initiated; but surely there was sufficient time between the reign of Nero and the period at which Tacitus wrote, to learn with certainty whether few or many
Christians

Christians had been put to death by Nero, even although the Romans should be supposed to have been incapable of discerning, at the moment of the execution, whether few or many were executed.

Mr Gibbon will not admit that Tacitus knew the vulgar denomination of the men who suffered. According to the Roman historian, they were called *Christians*; but according to the English, *Galileans*; neither will he admit, that the assertion of Tacitus respecting their great number ought to be credited. All then that remains is, that in the next edition of Tacitus we should read “*Galilæorum nonnulli*,” instead of “*Christianorum multitudo ingens*.”

P. 5. l. 16. “*He slew Paul*.” [Interfecit.] It is plain that Lactantius meant to distinguish the manner in which Paul died from the manner in which Peter died; and therefore either the word *gladio* has been omitted by the transcriber, or the word *interfecit*

perfecit implies, that Nero caused Paul to be slain with a sword, or to be beheaded. Paul, a freeman and a Roman citizen, was on every occasion honourably tenacious of the rights of his *state*; and I suppose, that, even at the last awful moment, he claimed his privilege of dying like a freeman and a Roman citizen. But let it be remembered, once for all, that I pretend not to obtrude any remark on my readers. They may account in some other manner for the general tradition as to the mode of Paul's death, or they may disregard that tradition altogether.

P. 5. l. 20. " Suddenly disappeared."
 [Nusquam repente comparuit.] Tollius bestows a note on this passage to the following effect. " All pure fictions ! Indeed I wonder how the ancient Christians got into the practice of *lying* so egregiously. Were I disposed to draw up a catalogue of *their* lies, they would be enough to load whole waggon; a fit present, in company with
 " the

“ the Sibylline oracles, for doating old wo-
 “ men.”

Amongst the *egregious lies* of the ancient Christians, Tollius ranks a vulgar report which prevailed over the Roman empire, “ That Nero was not dead, but would make
 “ his appearance again, and resume the sove-
 “ reignty.” Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 3. says, “ A-
 “ chaia atque Asia falso metu exterritæ, ve-
 “ lut Nero adventaret, vario super exitu
 “ ejus rumore, *eoque* pluribus eum vivere
 “ fingentibus credentibusque.” This hap-
 pened, as may be learned from the context, about eight months after the death of Nero. The historian supposes the report to have arisen from the various and contradictory accounts of the circumstances attending that event ; and indeed it was natural enough for men to imagine Nero still alive, since the stories of his death were inconsistent. And this notion took so deep root, that although the funerals of Nero were publicly perform-
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ed, and a monument erected for him in Rome, yet still he was believed by some to be alive. For Suetonius thus speaks: “ Et
 “ tamen non defuerunt qui per longum
 “ tempus vernis æstivisque floribus tumu-
 “ lum ejus ornarent, ac modò imagines præ-
 “ textatas in rostris præferrent, modò edicta
 “ quasi viventis, ac, brevi, magno inimico-
 “ rum malo, reversuri.” *Nero*, c. 50. Ta-
 citus mentions a base fellow, resembling Ne-
 ro in his countenance, who gave himself out
 to be that Emperor; and Suetonius informs
 us, that, after twenty years had elapsed from
 the death of Nero, an impostor appeared
 under his name, and was favourably recei-
 ved amongst the Parthians.

They who had seen the cruelties of the
 Emperor Nero might dread that he was still
 alive, and they who foresaw the consequen-
 ces of the extinction of the imperial family,
 might flatter themselves with the fond hopes
 of the return of an hereditary sovereign.

Of

Of this there are many examples in history. Hence impostors, under the name of Richard II. and of Richard Plantagenet Duke of York, found credit in England; and hence a false King Sebastian appeared on the Continent.

There is no reason to suppose that the ancient Christians invented the fiction of Nero being alive; and surely Lactantius, in particular, ought not to be charged with what he explodes as an absurdity.

P. 6. l. 4. "The Sibylline verses." The verses to which Lactantius is thought to allude, are miserably corrupted, and, in part, unintelligible. They begin thus: "Ἡξεῖ δ' ἐκ περ' ἄλλων γάμος μνηστοτόνος.—Gale conjectures that they were originally intended to describe Julius Cæsar.

The conclusion of this chapter is mutilated in the MS.; so that the sense given to it in the translation must be considered merely as a probable conjecture.

Chap. III.

P. 7. l. 5. “ Until he stretched forth his
 “ impious hands,” &c. Juvenal remarks,
Satyr. iv. ad fin. that Domitian shed the
 most honourable blood in Rome with impu-
 nity, and that he was not cut off until he
 became formidable to the meaner sort.

“ Atque utinam his potius nugis sola illa dedisset
 “ Tempora sævitæ, claras quibus abstulit urbi
 “ Illustresque animas impune, et vindice nullo.
 “ *Sed periit, postquam cerdonibus esse timendus*
 “ *Cæperat.* Hoc nocuit Lamiarum cæde madenti.”

It is probable that Juvenal and Lactantius
 allude to the same historical circumstance;
 but it does not appear what authority Juve-
 nal had for saying, that the assassins of Do-
 mitian avenged on him the injuries done to
 the meaner sort.

P. 7. l. 12. “ The memory of his name
 “ was erased.” [Etiam memoria nominis
ejus erasa est.] The senate issued a decree
 against

against Domitian to this effect: *Eradendos ubique titulos, abolendamque omnem memoriam.* See *Sueton. Domit. c. 23. Pagi. ad an. Christi 88.* has published an inscription originally set up in honour of Domitian, but mutilated and defaced, according to the decree of the senate.

P. 8. l. 6. “The church suffered no violent assaults from her enemies.” [Nullos inimicorum impetus passa.] If Lactantius meant, that the Christians remained in uninterrupted tranquillity during all that space, he was exceedingly misinformed; for there are undoubted evidences to the contrary, of Pagan as well as of Christian writers. It is probable that he meant to assert, that from the death of Domitian until the accession of Decius, there had been no *general* assault against the Christians, or *universal* persecution, authorised by edicts throughout the empire.

A critic, in *Journal Littéraire*, v. 7. part 1.

P. 23.

p. 23. gives a different turn to the expression, thus : “ Dans les tems qui ont suivi le
 “ regne de Domitien, il y a eu plusieurs
 “ bons Princes, qui ont gouverné l’Empire
 “ Romain, du tems desquels l’Eglise, qui ne
 “ fut point alors exposée aux insultes de
 “ ses ennemis, s’étendit par toute la terre.”

Chap. IV.

P. 8. l. 18. “ Decius.” See *Remains of Christian Antiquity*, vol. 2. p 13.—23. and the Notes.

Chap. V.

P. 9. l. 20. “ The adversaries of Heaven
 “ always,” &c. [Adversarios Dei *semper*
dignam scelere recipere mercedem.] According to Baluze and Le Nourry, the reading in the MS. is *sæpe* ; but Lenglet du Fresnoy asserts that it is *semper*. When eye-witnesses disagree, *who* is there that can decide ? I should be inclined to prefer *sæpe*, because this reading is most agreeable to historical truth ; and to the same purpose Lac-
 tantius

tantius expresses himself, *Instit.* v. 24. “Sed
 “idem, quamvis populi sui vexationes *et*
 “*hic in præfenti soleat* vindicare, tamen ju-
 “bet nos expectare patienter illum cœlestis
 “judicii diem, quo ipse pro suis quemque
 “meritis aut honoret, aut puniat.”

Chap. VI.

P. 12. l. 2. The character of Aurelian, as drawn by his professed panegyrist Vopiscus, fully justifies whatever Lactantius has said concerning that Emperor.

Chap. VII.

P. 16. l. 11. “But this was peculiar to
 “him, that whenever he saw a field,” &c.
 [Sed in hoc illud fuit præcipuum, quod ubi-
 cunque cultiorem agrum viderat, aut orna-
 tius ædificium, jam parata domino calumnia
 et pœna capitalis.] Thus translated by Mr
 Gibbon, i. 458. “The possession of an ele-
 “gant villa, or a well-cultivated estate, was
 “interpreted as a convincing evidence of
 “guilt.” By some strange mistake, the
 translation

translation imputes *that* injustice and cruelty to Herculus, which the original imputes to Diocletian.

Chap. VIII.

P. 18. l. 4. “In debauching males.” [Ad corrumpendos *mares*, quod est odiosum ac detestabile, verum etiam ad violandas primorum filias.] The MS. has *mores*. Archdeacon Battely appears to have been the first who suggested this emendation: Bishop Burnet adopted it, and it is approved by Grævius and other critics. But Le Nourry is seriously scandalised at it, and says, “Mira-
 “mur quomodo illa fictitia Cecilianî textûs
 “emendatio, vel potius depravatio, in eo-
 “rum, *quorum mores penitus corrupti non*
 “*sunt*, mentem venire potuerit.” p. 281. So that it should seem, by this lamentable piece of Latin, that nothing but extreme depravity of manners could have induced any man to read *mares* instead of *mores*.

Nevertheless the emendation appears fit
 and

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“ tantius accuses him of timidity in two places,” c. 7. & 8.; and in c. 9. he says of him, “ Erat in omni tumultu,” &c. To the same purpose, Tollius says, *ad. c. 10.* “ Mihi sanè a timore alienissimus fuisse videtur Diocletianus, qui se *virtute suâ* ad ipsum summi imperii fastigium admovit.”

Notwithstanding such positive opinions, it should seem that *both* authors have mistaken the sense of Lactantius; and it is certain that Heathen historians, who could have nothing of *the malice of religious zeal* against Diocletian, speak of him as Lactantius does.

Granting cowardice to be inconsistent with the character of a soldier of fortune, which is not altogether certain, and granting Diocletian to have obtained the empire by his valour, [*virtute suâ*], which is hardly probable, yet the inference drawn from those propositions, to the discredit of Lactantius, appears erroneous.

Lactantius never charges Diocletian with
want

want of personal courage. In c. 7. he says, that Diocletian “ orbem terræ — *timiditate* “ subvertit, tres *enim* participes regni sui fecit.” Here he ascribes the overthrow of the ancient system, and the division of the imperial dignity, to the *timiditas* of Diocletian, that is, to his apprehensions of the insecure state of a single Emperor. This is well expressed by Montesquieu. “ To prevent the continual treasons of the soldiery “ — he ordered that there should always be “ two Emperors and two Cæsars. He judged that the principal armies, being in the “ hands of those who shared the empire, “ would check and intimidate each other, “ and that the other armies, not being “ strong enough to make an Emperor of “ their own choosing, would lose by slow degrees the custom of electing,” &c. Translated by Fortin. Remarks on Eccles. Hist. ii. 261. 262.

A plan, formed in consequence of *rational*

nal apprehensions may be termed *timid*: but this impeaches not the *personal courage* of Diocletian, or charges him with *cowardice*.

In c. 8. Lactantius says, that Diocletian had *plus timiditatis* than his intrepid colleague Herculus. This only implies, that, comparatively speaking, Diocletian was more cautious and circumspect than Herculus, a man of a character altogether military, and ignorant of those arts of civil life in which Diocletian excelled.

To the same purpose also is the expression in Lactantius, c. 9. that Diocletian was “in
“ *omni tumultu meticulofus*.” He judged of future events by the past; he had seen Probus murdered by soldiers who loved him, and Aurelian by his familiar friends; he knew the fate of the sons of his master Carus; and therefore, like a sagacious politician, he feared when there was cause for fear.

Lactantius adds, but which has been overlooked by Mr Gibbon, that Diocletian “e-
“ *rat*

“rat *præ timore* scrutator rerum futura-
 “rum,” c. 10. This certainly does not im-
 ply any defect in personal courage ; for the
 basest and most superstitious dread of future
 events may prevail in the breast of a brave
 man ; neither does irreligion itself exempt
 the irreligious from a terrifying belief in
 spells and omens, or even from criminal in-
 quiries into things to come : the mind of
 man is so formed, that it *must* fear, either
 upon reasonable principles, or superstitious-
 ly, and without reason.

One might even admit, that Diocletian,
 either from nature, or in consequence of
 inactivity after a life of labour, had weak
 nerves ; but it does not therefore follow that
 he wanted personal courage. A man of
 unquestionable intrepidity in the field may
 be, like Diocletian, “in omni tumultu me-
 “ticulosus et animi dejectus.” History fur-
 nishes many examples of this ; and there was
 a famous general of our own, whose charac-
 ter

ter could not have been more justly drawn than in those words of Lactantius.

Heathen writers speak of Diocletian as Lactantius does, but in terms more general, after the manner of abridgers. Thus S. A. Victor, *p.* 172. “Valerio [Diocletiano] parum honesta in amicos fides erat, discor-
 “diarum sanè metu,” &c. And Eutropius, *l.* x. “Hic [Constantius] non modo amabilis, sed etiam venerabilis Gallis fuit:
 “præcipuè quod Diocletiani *suspectam* prudentiam et Maximiani sanguinariam temeritatem imperio ejus evaserant.”

Nay more, there is a saying of Diocletian himself, *ap. Vopisc. Hist. Aug. Script.* *p.* 224. “Bonus, *cautus*, optimus venditur Imperator.” In this he meant to delineate his own character; and the man who complains that, notwithstanding all his caution, he is imposed on, may well be described as one of a character suspicious and timid.

And, to add one authority more, Mr
 Gibbon,

Gibbon, in the very same page 424. appears to admit the truth of all that Lactantius says of Diocletian. “ He appears not,” says Mr Gibbon, “ to have possessed the daring and “ generous spirit of a hero who courts danger ;” — like the adopted son of Cæsar, “ he was distinguished as a statesman rather “ than as a warrior.” And at page 470. “ Fear sometimes pursued him into the solitude of Salona.”

Had the hypothesis of weak nerves and low spirits occurred to Mr Gibbon, it might have been held not unworthy of his attention ; for it reconciles many discordant reports and opinions, by presenting to our view a case, which, however rare in the *fourth* century, is perfectly familiar to us who live in the *eighteenth*.

P. 21. l. 9. “ Of unbounded arrogance.” The words in the MS. at this place are : “ Et “ contemnere omnia. Diocles enim ante “ imperium vocabatur, cùm rempublicam
“ talibus

“ talibus confiliis et talibus fociis everteret.”
 Le Nourry, *Disc. in L. Cecil d. M. P.* p. 136.
 says, “ Quænam autem, obsecro, est horum
 “ verborum connexio, tametsi copulâ *enim*
 “ jungantur? Quid ibi facit mutatum,
 “ aut Dioclis nomen, aut hujus mutationis
 “ commemoratio? Nonnulli quidem suspi-
 “ cantur in textu aliquid esse hiulcum aut
 “ depravatum; ita fanè et hic et alibi cor-
 “ ruptionis ea infimulant, et loca et dicta,
 “ quæ excusare non possunt.” That the
 words, as they stand in the MS. are confu-
 sed and without connection, is obvious. Le
 Nourry asserts this; and yet he will not al-
 low any emendation of them. His hypothe-
 sis is, that the treatise *de Mortibus Persecuto-*
rum is very obscure and very ill written;
 and therefore that Lactantius could not have
 been the author of it. In support of this
 hypothesis, he ascribes every error to the au-
 thor himself, and seems to argue for the in-
 fallibility of the transcriber, whom, at the
 same

same time, he acknowledges to have been absolutely ignorant of the Latin language. But, as all judicious critics must be sensible, that the treatise is in general perspicuous and well written, they will ascribe the manifest impropriety in this passage to the transcriber rather than to the author.

For *omnia* Gale reads *nomen*; but he did not advert to the improbability of the heroic measure, *contemnere nomen*, being introduced at the close of a period. Besides, this correction requires some additional word to make it intelligible; for what do the words *contemnere nomen* imply when taken by themselves, and to what do they relate at this place? Grævius saw the difficulty, and therefore he added the word *Diocli*, [or rather *Dioclis*] But the expression, as understood by Grævius, is languid and insignificant. That Galerius should have made light of the name of *Diocles*, after Diocletian ceased to be Emperor, is a circumstance hardly

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worth

worth recording. It should seem that the word *sic*, or rather *ita*, has been omitted by the transcriber. “ Diocles, *ita* enim ante
 “ imperium vocabatur, cùm,” &c. *Contem-
 nere omnia* seems right, and probably means,
 that Galerius set at nought every thing as
 well divine as human.

Chap. X.

P. 22. l. 8. “ The immortal sign.” Some
 authors, from a high opinion of the efficacy
 of that sign, take a circumstance for granted
 which surely requires proof. They suppose
 that the diviners who consulted the intrails
 of the victims, were in league with evil dæ-
 mons, and that those dæmons enabled them
 to judge of future events from certain ap-
 pearances in the victims. Now, what evi-
 dence is there of this ? The answer, I ima-
 gine, will be, that the diviners themselves
 acknowledged it, by remarking, that busi-
 ness could not proceed while the Christians
 were present. This is not satisfactory. The
 truth seems to be, that a company of impo-
 stors,

stors, occupied in deluding an aged and superstitious prince, did not chuse to proceed in their holy ceremonies, while the *profane* and the *Atheists* remained spectators of them. The irreligion of the Christians might be the *pretence*; but the true *reason* was, that the feats of divination could not be performed, without danger of detection, amidst the enemies of Paganism.

That the diviners were assisted by evil dæmons in the discovery of future events from the intrails of animals, was a supposition too rashly adopted by many of the ancient Christians; and to those persons who still incline to maintain it, I would recommend a dispassionate perusal of the *second* book of Cicero, *de Divinatione*.—Appius Pulcher, brother of the noted Clodius, “ was admitted very
 “ young into the college of augurs, and weak
 “ enough to believe that there was a real
 “ art and power of divining that subsisted
 “ in the augural discipline, and taught by
 U 2 “ the

“ the augural books : but he was the only
 “ one at that time who maintained it, and
 “ he was laughed at for his labour.” *Not.*
ad Ciceron. Epist. ad Familiar. i. 400. edit.
Ross. Notwithstanding the authority of this
 excellent critic, to whom another age will
 do full justice, I should be apt to suspect,
 that Appius Pulcher was no *weaker* than his
 elder colleagues, and that he fought the good
 opinion of the vulgar, at the expence of pro-
 stituting his own understanding, as the wont
 is. He dedicated his treatise to Cicero, that
 Cicero might be obliged, either to support
 the principles of the book, contrary to his
 own opinion, or to disavow them, contrary
 to the prejudices of the populace ; and thus,
 either hurt his own character or his credit.
 But Cicero saw the snare, and eluded it, by
 thanking Appius, in a parenthesis, for the
 honour done him. “ Mihi et Q. Fabius
 “ Virgilianus et C. Flaccus L. F. et, dili-
 “ gentissimè, M. Octavius Cn. F. demon-
 “ stravit

“stravit me a te plurimi fieri : quod ego-
 “met multis argumentis jam antea judica-
 “ram, *maximèque illo libro augurali, quem*
 “*ad me amantissimè scriptum, suavissimum*
 “*recepi.*” *Epist. iii. 4. edit. Ross.*

Chap. XI.

P. 24. l. 1. “Gods of the mountains.”
 “Deorum montium.” Some critics ima-
 gine that Lactantius meant to say, that the
 mother of Galerius paid divine worship to
 mountains. It is more probable that he al-
 ludes to the phrase in the Old Testament,
 “Dii montium,” or “Gods of the moun-
 “tains.” Perhaps the original reading was
 “montensium,” a word known in Latin, al-
 though not of classical authority.

P. 24. l. 4. “The Christians would not
 “partake,” [Christiani abstinebant,] be-
 cause it was not lawful for them to sit down
 at idol-feasts. That they fasted while their
 mistresses celebrated a feast, is a circumstance
 very probable ; it was, however, a weak and
 peevish

peevish singularity, which their institutions did not require, and which ill suited that prudence so earnestly recommended by their master to his disciples. Mr Gibbon, i. 648. briefly says, “ That the mother of Galerius “ was offended by the *disregard* of some of “ her Christian servants.” He might have said, as briefly, and with more perspicuity, “ That she was offended at their refusal to “ join in idol-feasts.”

P. 24. l. 18. “ How pernicious it would “ be to raise disturbances throughout the “ world, and to shed so much blood ; that “ the Christians were wont with eagerness “ to meet death,” &c. [Quia perniciosum esset inquietari orbem terrarum, fundi sanguinem multorum ; illos libenter mori solere.] Mr Gibbon, i. 681. supposes, that “ Diocletian urged in the strongest “ terms the danger as well as the *cruelty* of “ shedding the blood of those *deluded fanatics*.” But there is nothing in Lactantius with

with respect to “the cruelty of shedding the
“blood of those deluded fanatics.” The lan-
guage of Diocletian is that of a politician, not
of a moralist: the words employed by Lactan-
tius are those of Diocletian, and they are in
character; but the version of Mr Gibbon
expresses his own humane feelings.

P. 25. l. 10. “That his own fault might
“be imputed to other men.” [Ut aliorum
culpæ ascriberetur quicquid ipse deliquerat.]
Suidas has preserved in his Collections a pas-
sage to the like purpose. ἐπεκάλυψε πολλά-
κις τὰ τῆς οἰκείας φύσεως ἐλαττώματα, πᾶσαν
σκληρὰν πράξιν ἑτέροις ἀνατιθείς. “He was
“wont to conceal the faults of his own na-
“tural disposition, by placing the ill that he
“did to the account of others.” So also Eu-
tropius, ix. “Diocletianus moratus callidè
“fuit, sagax præterea, et admodum subtilis
“ingenio, et qui severitatem suam alienâ in-
“vidiâ vellet explere.” The paraphrase of
Mr Gibbon expresses all that the historian
meant,

meant, and expresses it with an energy of which the historian was incapable. “ Maximian, insensible to pity, and fearless of consequences, was the ready instrument of every act of cruelty, which the policy of that artful prince [Diocletian] might at once suggest and disclaim. As soon as a bloody sacrifice had been offered to prudence or to revenge, Diocletian, by his seasonable interposition, saved the remaining few whom he had never designed to punish, gently censured the severity of his stern colleague, and enjoyed the comparison of a golden and an iron age, which was universally applied to their opposite maxims of government.” If this picture is like, *who* is there but must turn away his eyes from it with abhorrence? It is a picture sketched by Lactantius and Eutropius, and finished, with the utmost truth and vigour of colouring, by Mr Gibbon.

Chap. XII.

P. 27. l. 16. “ An image of the divinity.”
 [Simulacrum Dei quæritur.] Pagi. *Annal.*
 says, “ Credibile itaque imagines parùm a
 “ Christianis usurpatas fuisse, primis ferè
 “ quatuor sæculis.” But another Roman-
 Catholic author, Baluze, candidly says, “ Si-
 “ mulacris itaque carebant ecclesiæ Chri-
 “ stianorum.” *Not. ad Lactant.* p. 28. Were
 all men as candid as Baluze, how many
 disputes in ecclesiastical history might there
 be determined at the first hearing !

P. 27. l. 21. “ That church, situated on
 “ rising ground, was within view of the pa-
 “ lace ; and Diocletian and Galerius stood,
 “ as if on a watch-tower, disputing long,”
 &c. [Ipsi verò in speculis, in alto enim
 constituta ecclesia, ex palatio videbatur, diu
 inter se concertabant.]

Mosheim, *d. Reb. Christianorum ante Con-*
stant. M. p. 917. says, that the Christians of
 that age were studious of erecting their
 X churches.

churches on elevated ground ; but, in proof of this general proposition, he gives no more than two examples, one of a church at Carthage, and the other of this church at Nicomedia. Mr Gibbon, i. 682. 683. says, “ That the principal church at Nicomedia “ was situated on an eminence in the most “ populous and beautiful part of the city, “ and that *it towered above the imperial palace.*” When the words of Lactantius are carefully inspected, it will appear, that the church did not overlook the palace, but, on the contrary, that the palace overlooked the church.

Nicomedia was built on the side of a hill ; *Pococke's Travels*, vol. ii. part ii. p. 96. A church, erected about the middle of the hill, or, to use a colloquial phrase, “ half way “ up the hill,” might well be said to have been erected on an eminence. There was no ostentation in the choice of this site, as has sometimes been affirmed ; and there is
all

all possible reason for supposing that the palace at Nicomedia was built on the summit of the hill. The expression, “*ipſi in ſpectu culis,*” implies, that the reſidence of the Emperors *towered above the church*; although the church, being on a riſing ground, and perhaps built to a greater height than the adjoining houſes, might be diſcernible from the palace. This will be underſtood by every reader who has ſeen a town ſituated on the ſide of a hill.

Chap. XIII.

P. 29. l. 6. “Improperly indeed, but with high ſpirit.” [*Eſſi non rectè, magno tamen animo.*] We muſt not ſuppoſe that *non rectè* implies any thing tending to alleviate the offence. The claffical ſenſe of it is, “very wrong”; and ſo Lactantius elſewhere uſes *non piè* for “impiously;” and, in like manner, *Non perfectè, non integrâ conſcientiâ*. Lactantius ſays that the edict was pulled down by *quidam*, “a certain perſon;”

and hence it has been concluded, that the man was obscure, and that Lactantius knew not *who* he was, and consequently that there is a diversity between that historian and the narrative in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* viii. 5. where the offender is said to have been a person of eminence. But this is too critical. When Cicero says, *quidam ex philosophis*, he means not that the philosopher was obscure, or that his name was unknown; and as Lactantius highly disapproved of the conduct of that zealous but misguided Christian, he might have judged it expedient to make no mention of his name.

P. 29. l. 8. “The triumphs of Goths and
“Sarmatians.” [*Victorias Gothorum et Sarmatarum præpositas.*] Various have been the interpretations given of this fatal witticism.

Maucroix, the French translator of Lactantius, renders it thus: “Se moquant des
“*furnoms des Gotiques et Sarmatiques* que
“*les Empereurs s’arogeoyent.*”

Burnet,

Burnet, following the Oxford and Cambridge editors, says, “ And rallied the Em-
 “ perors, who had put among their titles,
 “ that they had triumphed over the Goths
 “ and the Sarmatians, that they acted like
 “ those whom they pretended that they had
 “ subdued.”

Boherel says, “ Ironicè dictum, id est,
 “ Christianos, quamvis subdites, jam loco
 “ esse Gothorum et Sarmatarum debellan-
 “ dorum.”

Grævius imagined that some error had crept into the text; but he proposed no emendation of it.

There seems to be a studied ambiguity in the expression. “ This edict resembles a
 “ proclamation of victories *over* or *of* Goths
 “ and Sarmatians;” which may allude to the barbarous and obscure origin of Diocletian and Galerius.

Chap. XIV.

P. 30. l. 1. “ Set the palace on fire.” Lac-
 tantius

Lactantius ascribes this to the contrivance of Galerius. Eusebius thus speaks, H. E. viii. 6. “The fire happened *I know not how.*” [ἐκ οὐδ’ ὅπως.] But Constantine, in his harangue to the Faithful, c. 25. speaking, as is generally supposed, of this event, says, that a flash of lightning set fire to the palace. [ἐδήσθη μὲν τοι τὰ βασίλεια καὶ ὁ οἶκος αὐτῶν ἐπινεμομένῃ σκηπτῇ, νεμομένης τε ὑβρανίας φλογός.]

It was fit that Eusebius, who resided at a great distance from Nicomedia, should speak with uncertainty; but it seems singular that Constantine and Lactantius, who at that time were on the spot, should have given such irreconcilable accounts of the cause of the fire.

Lactantius, it may be observed, spoke from popular rumour alone; for there was no proof against Galerius and his domestics, and they never would have made a voluntary avowal of their guilt, although they had
been

been indeed guilty ; and therefore we must admit, that the authority of Constantine ought to be preferred to that of Lactantius, if both speak of the same event. But this is doubtful. Constantine says, that the palace of Diocletian was set on fire by lightning, and that the Emperor, in consequence of the accident, came to be disturbed in his mind : but Constantine speaks of this as having happened *after* the persecution ; and if so, the fire mentioned by Lactantius was different from that mentioned by Constantine.

P. 30. l. 4. “ The very appellation of
 “ *Christian* grew odious on account of that
 “ fire.” [Et cum ingenti invidia simul cum
 palatio Christianorum nomen ardebat.] The
 general sense is here given instead of an ex-
 act translation. There is a quibble on the
 word *ardere*, used in a metaphorical as well
 as a literal sense. “ The fire that invaded
 “ the palace was not hotter than the zeal of
 “ popular odium which flamed against the
 “ Christians.”

“ Christians.” For this mode of expression there are classical precedents ; it is, however, a foolish figure, which no precedents can justify.

P. 30. l. 7. “ In concert with the eunuchs.” A groundless charge ! The eunuchs of Diocletian would never have endangered their own lives, and ruined their present fortunes, and all hopes of advancement, by cutting off that Emperor whose favourites they were ; and if persons professing Christianity had been the criminals, their guilt would have been discovered by means of the tortures promiscuously applied. I say *persons professing Christianity* ; for there can be no incendiaries, or favourers of incendiaries, amongst *real Christians*.

Chap. XV.

P. 32. l. 1. “ His wife *Prisca*.” The name of the wife of Diocletian was unknown until the discovery of the MS. *d. M. P.* In the Acts of S. Sufanna, she is styled *Serena* ;
in.

in the Acts of St George, *Alexandra*; and in the life of Pope Vigilius, *Gest. Pontif.* she is styled *Eleutheria*. This shews what credit is due to such writers !

P. 32. l. 6. “ Without evidence, by witnesses or confession, condemned.” [Sine probatione ad confessionem damnati.] The passage in the original is obscure, and perhaps the translation does not convey its just sense. Bauldri supposes, “ that they were “ condemned to become *confessors* for the “ faith.” But that interpretation appears uncouth. Mosheim. *d. Reb. Christianorum ante Constant. M.* p. 933. says, “ Viri docti “ nescientes, quid sit *ad confessionem damna- “ ri*, vitiatum putant hunc locum, et sanare “ volunt ; sed satis ille sanus est, medicique “ non indiget. Sensus est, etsi nullis, ut “ jureconfulti loquuntur, indiciis gravati essent Christiani sacerdotes, tamen tormentis subiciebantur, ut confiterentur, se aut “ fratres et amicos eorum incendii auctores “ esse,

“ esse, quumque confiteri nollent, aut crucia-
 “ tibus nihil exprimi posset ex illis, tamen pro
 “ reis habebantur, et morte afficiebantur.”

His meaning seems to be, “ that tortures were
 “ applied to persons against whom there was
 “ neither evidence or presumption of guilt.”

There are who read “ sine probatione aut
 “ confessione;” that is, “ without evidence,
 “ either by witnesses or by their own con-
 “ fession.”

Chap. XVII.

P. 37. l. 3. “ *There* to celebrate the com-
 “ mencement of the twentieth year of his
 “ reign.” [Ut illic *vicennalium diem* cele-
 braret.] A term of empire to which no one
 since the æra of the Antonines had attain-
 ed.

P. 37. l. 7. “ Unable to bear the Roman
 “ freedom of speech.” [Cum libertatem
 populi Romani ferre non poterat.] Mr
 Gibbon, with a reference to this passage in
 Lactantius, says, that “ Diocletian was dis-
 “ gusted

“ disgusted with the licentious familiarity of
 “ the people.” But Lactantius speaks not,
 either of freedom of speech, or of licentious
 familiarity in general. He alludes to the li-
 berty of the *Feriæ Saturnales*, or what Ho-
 race calls *Libertas Decembris*; and this is per-
 fectly obvious from the dates here enumera-
 ted. Diocletian could not endure to reside in
 Rome for *the thirteen days* that preceded the
first of January. It follows that he left
 Rome on the *eighteenth* day of December.
 Now the *Feriæ Saturnales* commenced on
 the *seventeenth* day of December; and there-
 fore the sense of Lactantius is, that Diocle-
 tian had no sooner experienced the farcasti-
 cal merriment of the first day of the *Satur-
 nalia*, than he hurried away from Rome.
 An old man, accustomed to the state and
 the reserve of an eastern monarch, could not
 but be disgusted with the freedom of that
 levelling season.

P. 37. l. 22. “ He made a circuit,” &c.

[Per circuitum ripæ Strigæ.] What is meant by this, and what was the road that Diocletian took in his journey to Nicomedia, has been a subject of serious controversy amongst learned men. It reminds one of the dispute mentioned by Horace, “*Which* was the best “ road from Rome to Brundisium ?” Alas ! that the life of those who live on this side the flood should be too short for such important inquiries ! Let us satisfy ourselves with knowing, that Diocletian was at Ravenna, and that he went to Nicomedia, and that probably he took the *most convenient* road between the one city and the other.

P. 39. l. 4. “ So wan — as hardly to be “ known again.” [Vix agnoscendus, quippe qui tabuisset, &c.] He who prefers the elegancies of circumlocution to plain English, may read, “ So pale and emaciated, that he “ could scarcely have been *recognised* by “ those

“ those to whom *his person* was *the most fa-*
 “ *miliar.*”

Chap. XVIII.

P. 40. l. 1. “ He now assailed Diocletian.”
 Of this conference Mr Gibbon says, i. 475.
 “ If it were possible to rely on the *partial*
 “ testimony of an *injudicious* writer, we
 “ might ascribe the abdication of Diocletian
 “ to the menaces of Galerius, and relate the
 “ particulars of a *private* conversation be-
 “ tween the two princes, in which the for-
 “ mer discovered as much pusillanimity, as
 “ the latter displayed ingratitude and arro-
 “ gance.” And he adds in a note, “ Were
 “ the particulars of this conference more
 “ consistent with *truth* and *decency*, we might
 “ still ask, how they came to the knowledge
 “ of an *obscure* rhetorician? But there are
 “ many historians who put us in mind of
 “ the admirable saying of the great Condé
 “ to Cardinal de Retz. *Ces coquins nous font*
 “ *parler et agir, comme ils auroient fait eux*
 “ *mêmes*

“ *mêmes à notre place.*” The sum of all this appears to be, that the *obscure* rhetorician, Lactantius, was *partial* and *injudicious*, a relater of things *inconsistent with truth and decency*, and, if I mistake not the sense of the word *coquin*, a *scoundrel* and a *rascal*.

Had Lactantius been the contemporary of Mr Gibbon, and engaged in a *paper-war* with that elegant writer, it might be doubted whether *coquin* would have been a fair weapon, unless in the utmost extremity.

This *obscure rhetorician* was, without controversy, the most elegant writer of *his* age, and surely he might have been named without the addition of any contemptuous epithet.

Mr Gibbon asks, “ How the particulars
“ of the *private* conference came to the
“ knowledge of Lactantius ?” The answer must be conjectural ; for Lactantius does not say from whom he heard them ; and indeed although he had, it is not probable that Mr

Gibbon

Gibbon would have credited his report: for by what means could an author come to the knowledge of what is inconsistent with truth? and had Lactantius said, that he received his information from Constantine himself, who was then at court, this would have added to his effrontery, but would not have made him more credible in the opinion of his censurer; for he would still have been an *obscure scoundrel*, who related things *inconsistent with truth and decency*.

Let it be observed in passing, that Lactantius does not say that the conference was altogether private, for he speaks of Maximin Daia as being present.

We learn from a curious passage in Vopiscus, *Hist. Aug. Script.* p. 224. that Diocletian, after his retirement, conversed familiarly with the acquaintance of his youth, that he scrupled not to point out some errors in his own administration, and even attempted to apologise for them. Hence we
may

may reasonably conclude, that Diocletian omitted not to complain of the harsh usage received from Galerius; and there can be no doubt that Galerius, being what he was, would boast of the influence which he successfully exerted over Diocletian. And thus we cannot suppose that this conversation, although it had been private, could have remained a secret, while the resentment of Diocletian, and the vanity of Galerius, naturally concurred in disclosing it.

But it is said, that the particulars related by Lactantius are inconsistent with truth and decency, because they bring a charge of pusillanimity against Diocletian, and of ingratitude and arrogance against Galerius.

Lactantius, however, observes, that, at that time, Diocletian was just recovering from a long and dangerous indisposition, which had weakened his body, and impaired his mental faculties. Besides, he had reason to be alarmed at the growing power and augmented

augmented armies of Galerius. Here there was just cause of dread ; and indeed there is internal evidence that Diocletian acted from compulsion, and not from choice, when he raised Severus and Daia to sovereign power. “ It was their want of merit and personal consequence,” as Mr Gibbon well observes, i. 479. “ that chiefly recommended them.” And it is incredible that the politic Diocletian would have admitted such worthless and insignificant persons to a share in the empire of the world, if he could have prevented a nomination equally disgraceful and pernicious.

Are the ingratitude and arrogance of Galerius circumstances so very incredible ?

Gratitude is a plant which seldom springs up and flourishes in the breast of a Galerius. Nor is it strange, that a man elevated from the meanest rank to supreme dominion, prosperous in war, environed with slaves and flatterers, and having mighty armies at his com-

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mand,

mand, should be arrogant. Indeed, to use an expression of Lord Shaftesbury, it would not have been “according to the truth of art,” had Lactantius delineated Galerius in other colours.

P. 40. l. 8. “Nerva.” To the same purpose S. A. Victor says, “Ubi prospexit, [im-
 “perium] nisi a superioribus robustiori-
 “busque corpore animoque geri non posse,
 “—semet eo abdicavit.” *Cæsar*. p. 126. It is probable, however, that Nerva never abdicated the empire, in the proper sense of the word *abdicate*, although he laid the whole charge of government on Trajan. He adopted Trajan, xiv. kal. Octob. A. U. C. 850. [18th Sept.] He died, after a short illness, vi. kalend. Feb. A. U. C. 851. [27th Jan.] At that time Nerva and Trajan were consuls. Pliny says, *Paneg.* p. 57. “Secundum [con-
 “sulatum] imperator quidem, *sub impera-*
 “*tore* tamen inisti.” This shews, that on the 1st of January, A. U. C. 851. Nerva was
 considered

considered as Emperor. As he died on the 27th of January in that year, after an illness of a few days, it follows, that this abdication, if it happened at all, must have happened in the course of the first three weeks of January. Now it is hardly possible that Nerva would have assumed the office of consul, and immediately after have retired to a private station.

It is not difficult to trace the origin of this popular report of the abdication of Nerva. Every one knew that the Emperor, unable to repress the insolence and rebellion of the pretorian guards, called Trajan to his aid, adopted him, and invested him with imperial authority : it was also known that Trajan had the entire administration of public affairs ; and *that* saying of Nerva was remembered, “ I have done nothing that can
 “ hinder me from laying down my power,
 “ and living with security in a private station.” *Dion Cassius*, lxviii. Those circumstances,

stances, when taken together, might naturally give rise to the notion, that Nerva did abdicate the empire. It is remarkable that Diocletian, in contrasting his own situation with that of Nerva, observed, that with regard to himself, to resign was “*minus tutum, quòd in tam longo imperio multorum sibi odia quæsisset.*” This obviously alludes to the memorable saying of Nerva. [*ἀσφαλως ἰδιωτεῦσαι.*]

P. 44. l. 4. “How! that dancer,” &c. [Ilumne saltatorem, temulentum, ebriosum, cui nox pro die, et dies pro nocte.] A character excellently confirmed by a passage in an anonymous compiler, whose work is subjoined to Ammianus Marcellinus in the edition of H. Valesius. “*Erat ignobilis et moribus et natalibus, ebriosus, et hoc Galerio amicus.*”

Mr Gibbon, i. 479. softens the harsh lines of the portrait. The Severus of Lactantius and of the anonymous compiler, is “*a ridiculous*”

“ tous drunken sot,” and esteemed, on that account, by Galerius. But the Severus of Mr Gibbon is only “ addicted to pleasure.” In what follows Mr Gibbon is singularly inaccurate. He says, “ the diligence and fidelity of Severus are acknowledged *even* “ by Lactantius.” But Lactantius neither blames nor applauds Severus; he simply relates what was spoken of him by Diocletian and Galerius: and supposing the narrative of the conference to have been altogether a fiction, Mr Gibbon ought not to have drawn the character of Severus from that fiction.

P. 44. l. 8. “ A faithful paymaster and “ purveyor.” Offices not so mean as an unlearned reader might imagine. Severus was probably *Quæstor* in the armies of Galerius.

“ *Præbere annonam,*” and *præbere stipendia*, are unexceptionable phrases; yet the propriety of *præbere*, used absolutely, is questioned. Hence *præfuit* has been suggested as an emendation for *præbuit*. But why should

should we be so anxious in bringing the language of the fourth century to the standard of the Augustan age? Besides, when we recollect that not one hundredth part of the writings of the Augustan age is preserved, we ought to be cautious in condemning a phrase as new and illegitimate on account of its not being discovered in that hundredth part.

The reason assigned by Galerius for his recommendation of Severus is highly characteristic: “He who has acted faithfully
“ in the office of purveyor and paymaster,
“ is capable of fitly discharging the duties
“ of a *Cæsar*.” Every age affords examples of a similar mode of reasoning adopted by injudicious great men.

Chap. XIX.

P. 45. l. 14. “Every one looked at Constantine.” [Constantinum omnes intuebantur.] Whenever Lactantius speaks of Constantine before his accession to sovereign authority,

authority, it is in artful and elegant strains of commendation, as if he were preparing his readers to expect great achievements from the hero of the story.

P. 46. l. 3. “An eminence.” [Locus altus.] Mr Gibbon, i. 467. says, “On a spacious plain,” probably for the convenience of the assembled multitudes. But although there were “a spacious plain” in the neighbourhood of Nicomedia, the words *locus altus* can never bear that sense.

P. 46. l. 10. “That he was become infirm, that he needed repose after his fatigues, and that he would resign the empire into hands more vigorous and able.” [Se invalidum esse, requiem post labores quærere, imperium *validioribus* tradere.] Whatever might have been the true causes of the resignation of Diocletian, it was publicly ascribed to his bad health and his growing infirmities. Thus the panegyrist of Maximian Herculus, and Constantine, § 9. says,

says, “ However allowable it might have
 “ been for *that* prince to found a retreat,
 “ whom years urged, and whom health had
 “ deserted, yet that *you*, with such unim-
 “ paired strength, with such vigour in all
 “ your limbs, with that fire in your eyes
 “ which befits sovereign command, we mar-
 “ vel indeed that *you* should have entertain-
 “ ed the hopes of premature retirement and
 “ ease.” [Sed tamen utcunque fas fuerit
eum principem, quem anni cogere, aut vale-
tudo deficeret, receptui canere, te verò, in
quo adhuc istæ [f. integræ] solidæque vires,
hic totius corporis vigor, hic imperatorius
ardor oculorum, immaturum otium sperasse
miramur.]

Chap. XXI.

P. 51. l. 5. “ Into work-houses.” [In
 gynæceum.] Some interpret this to signify
 “ the seraglio,” but without any reason.
 See *Du Cange, v. Gynæceum.*

Chap. XXIV.

P. 58. l. 9. "He had made a like request
 " long before, but in vain." [*Quem jamdu-*
dum frustra repetierat.] The words, *frustra*
repetierat, are not in the MS. Something,
 however, of that kind is necessary to com-
 plete the sense of the passage. Mosheim,
d. Reb. Christ. ante Constantin. M. p. 949.
 understands Lactantius to mean that Gale-
 rius invited Constantine back after his flight
 into Britain. [*Tentabat enim Constantinum*
blanditiis ex Britannia elicere, et ad aulam
revocare.] But there is nothing in Lactan-
 tius that can bear any such meaning.

P. 59. l. 4. "A warrant." [*Dedit figil-*
lum.] Le Nourry, p. 323. understands this
 to be the *evictio* in the Theodosian Code,
l. 4. d. cursu publico; that is, in modern lan-
 guage, "a warrant, signed and sealed, for
 " post-horses."

P. 59. l. 12. "Carried off from the prin-
 " cipal stages all the horses maintained at

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“ the public expence.” [Sublatisque per mansiones multas omnibus equis publicis, evolavit.] This is related by Lactantius in a simple and probable manner. In other historians, as Mr Gibbon observes, i. 482. it is “ a very foolish story.” Thus S. A. Victor says, “ Cùm ad frustrandos insequentes, publica jumenta, quaquam iter egerat, interficeret.” *d. Cæsar.* p. 173. Zosimus, l. ii. says, that “ Constantine caused all the post-horses that he had used to be hamstringed.” And to the same purpose, the anonymous writer published by Valefius, “ Veredis post se truncatis.”

Mr Gibbon, in describing Constantine's course, says, “ Leaving the palace of Nicomedia in the night, he travelled post through Bithynia, Thrace, Dacia, Pannonia, Italy, and Gaul.” i. 482. It should seem, that, without departing from historical evidence, we might abridge this journey a little. It is probable that, at that time, Galerius was

was

was in Illyricum, and not at Nicomedia. This will cut off Bithynia, Thrace, and Dacia.

The anonymous writer, published by Valesius, says, “*Summâ festinatione — Alpes* “*transgressus*, ad patrem Constantium venit.” The historian would hardly have begun his narrative at the Alps, if he had supposed that Constantine set out from Asia.—Eutropius, l. x. says of Galerius, “*Ipse in Illyrico commoratus est.*” Constantine was raised to sovereign power, viii. *kal. Aug.* [25th July] in the year 306 of the vulgar æra. *Fasti Idatiani*, on vi. *kal. Nov.* in the same year [27th Oct. 306.] The pretorian bands at Rome chose Maxentius Emperor, *Lactantius*, d. M. P. c. 44. And from the same treatise, c. 26. we learn, that Galerius, on hearing of the election of Maxentius, sent for Severus, put under his command the army that had belonged to Maximian Herculus, and encouraged him to assail

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Rome.

Rome. It is also said in the same chapter, that Maxentius feared lest Galerius should leave Severus in Illyricum, and march into Italy with his own army. Now, all this is inconsistent with the notion, that, at that time, Galerius did reside at Nicomedia in Bithynia ; nor less so is the account of the invasion of Italy by Galerius.—Eumenius, *Paneg. Constant. Aug.* § 14. says, that Maximian Herculus was “ ab *Illyrico* repudiatus ;” which implies that Galerius resided in that province—It is certain that Galerius, after his retreat from Italy, named Licinius Emperor, at Carnutum in Pannonia [part of Illyricum], iii. *Id. Nov.* [11th November.] *Fasti Idatiani. Prosper Aquitanus.* Zosimus alludes to this, l. ii. where he speaks of Diocletian being ἐν Κάρνῳ πόλει Κελτικῇ. in *Carnutum*, a Celtic city. Zosimus, not having judgement enough to conceal his own ignorance, explained *Carnutum* to be *Chartres* in France. As to the year in which
Licinius

Licinius was named Emperor, there is a difference of opinion amongst learned men. Some place that event in 307, and others in 308. That circumstance, however, does not materially affect the present question.

The result of the whole seems to be, that it is probable that when Constantine took flight, Galerius resided in Illyricum, and not at Nicomedia; and thus the journey which Constantine performed will lose much of its romantic appearance.

P. 60. l. 13. “ And so began his administration by re-establishing the holy religion.” [Hæc fuit prima ejus sanctio, sanctæ religionis *restituta*.] The last word can hardly be brought within the rules of grammatical construction. The emendations proposed are, *restitutæ*, *sua restituta*, *templa restituta*, *restitutio*. Bauldri observes, that *restituta* might, by analogy, mean the same thing as *restitutio*. Thus, in Apuleius, *adlocuta* is put for *adlocutio*; in Tertullian, *defensa*

fensa for *defensio*; and in Cyprian, *remissa* for *remissio*.

To this event it is supposed that Lactantius alludes in the Preface to his Institutes.

“ Quod opus nunc nominis tui auspicio in-
 “ choamus, Constantine Imperator Maxime,
 “ qui primus Romanorum Principum, re-
 “ pudiatis erroribus, Majestatem Dei Singu-
 “ laris ac Veri cognovisti et honorasti. Nam
 “ cùm ille dies felicissimus orbi terrarum il-
 “ luxisset, quo te Deus Summus ad beatum
 “ imperii culmen evexit, salutarem univer-
 “ sis et optabilem principatum præclaro in-
 “ itio auspicatus es; cùm everfam sublatam-
 “ que justitiam reducens, teterrimum alio-
 “ rum facinus expiasti.” One might, how-
 ever, conjecture that this elegant eulogium alluded to the edict of Constantine and Licinius in behalf of the Christians.

That Christianity prevailed in the west of Europe about the beginning of the fourth century, and that Polytheism visibly declined,

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ned, may be inferred from the conduct of Constantine, who, in the early favour that he shewed to the Christians, must be presumed to have acted on principles of policy, and not from religious conviction.

Chap. XXVI.

P. 63. l. 2. “ Put some magistrates to death.” [Occisis quibusdam iudicibus.]

The pretorian foldiers killed Abellius, the Governor of Rome. *Zosimus*, l. ii.

P. 64. l. 14. “ Given to change.” [Rerum novarum cupidus.] Julian says, that Herculus was φιλοπράγμων καὶ ἄπιστος. *Cæsar*. “ One who would always be doing, “ and in whose sincerity no confidence could “ be put.”

P. 64. l. 19. “ The foldiers—abandoned “ Severus.” “ Duxerat magnum Severus “ exercitum, et hostem suum, perfidiâ deser- “ tus, armaverat.” *Incert. Paneg. Const. Aug.* § 3.

At the end of this chapter there are these words :

words : “ Ab hoc capite suos persequi.” Different conjectures have been proposed, in order to supply the words that are evidently wanting. “ Ab hoc *cæpit* suos persequi.” *N. Heinsius*. “ Ab hoc capite, suos persequi *cæperunt*.” *Tollius*. This is hardly intelligible ; for to whom does *cæperunt* relate ? *Bunemannus* says, “ Cogitavi quoque legi
 “ posse, *ob hoc suos cæpit persequi* ; id est, ob
 “ Severum occisum, Galerius suos, generum
 “ scilicet et generi patrem, persequi cæpit.” But how could *Herculius* be called in Latin the *sui* of *Galerius* ? and how can it be said that *Galerius began* hostilities against *Herculius* and *Maxentius* on account of the death of *Severus*, since it is certain that *Galerius* encouraged *Severus* to invade Italy ? *Heuman* thinks that the words ought to be struck out, which, no doubt, is the easiest method for a critic to get rid of a *locus desperatus*.

Chap. XXVII.

P. 66. l. 17. "Some of his legions," &c. [Quædam legiones, &c.] Mr Gibbon, i. 491. first mistakes the meaning of Lactantius, and then ridicules him. "We are informed," says he, "that the legions themselves were
 "struck with horror and remorse; and that
 "those pious sons of the republic refused
 "to violate the sanctity of their venerable
 "parent. But when we reflect with how
 "much ease, in the more ancient civil wars,
 "the zeal of party and the habits of mili-
 "tary obedience had converted the native
 "citizens of Rome into her most implacable
 "enemies, we shall be inclined to distrust
 "this extreme delicacy of strangers and
 "barbarians, who had never beheld Italy
 "till they entered it in a hostile manner."

"The zeal of party and the habits of mi-
 "litary obedience," existed not in the age
 of Galerius, however well such things may
 serve to deck out a period. Even in this

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short:

short history by Lactantius, there are examples of defection amongst veteran troops, and of revolts of whole armies.

It may also be fit to observe, that Lactantius, instead of speaking of the legions *in general*, speaks of *some legions* only, and that there is no reason for supposing that *all* the troops of Galerius were strangers and barbarians.

Besides, Mr Gibbon overlooks one material part of the narrative of Lactantius. The soldiers recollected that they were serving the father-in-law against the son-in-law. The remembrance of the ancient civil wars might have alarmed them, and they might have fancied that their service under Galerius, the father-in-law of Maxentius, was ominous, and portended that destruction awaited them similar to that of the armies of Pompey; and *this* is the more probable, because it appears from numberless examples, that the

Heathens

Heathens of that age were immoderately superstitious.

And perhaps there was another cause for their superstition. From the days of Augustus Rome had become a Divinity, partly through the pride of the Roman people, and partly in consequence of the obsequiousness of the vanquished nations. What notion it was that men formed to themselves of the Divinity of walls and houses, or of the Divinity of a state in general, it is impossible for us to conceive ; but there might be a certain dread in rude uncultivated minds of what had, for ages, been represented as something supernatural and venerable.

Mr Gibbon censures Lactantius for another circumstance in his narrative. “ We
 “ are told,” says he, “ that Galerius, who
 “ had formed a very imperfect notion of
 “ the greatness of Rome by the cities of the
 “ East, with which he was acquainted, found
 “ his forces inadequate to the siege of that

“ immense capital. But the extent of a city
 “ serves only to render it more accessible to
 “ the enemy. Rome had long since been
 “ accustomed to submit on the approach of
 “ a conqueror, nor could the temporary
 “ enthusiasm of the people have long con-
 “ tended against the discipline and valour of
 “ the legions.”

It is probable enough that Lactantius may have spoken with some degree of that vanity incident to all men whenever the honour of the metropolis of their nation is concerned : but his observation is not so very trivial as Mr Gibbon imagines.

Galerius needed a larger army than what he had with him to invest Rome. [Ad circumfédenda mœnia] ; and it would have been hazardous to besiege an extensive city without investing it.

The extent of a city may render it more accessible to the enemy when the garrison is weak, not so when it is strong ; and in hi-
 story

Story there are many examples of cities that have been successfully defended, notwithstanding their great extent, and the weakness of their works, because their garrisons were numerous, and had full room to act.

The enthusiasm of a people is not altogether temporary in its nature, or always unable to contend against the valour and discipline of legions.

But, indeed, Mr Gibbon forgets the state of the city of Rome at that time, and he loses sight of the pretorian bands, and of the army that formerly belonged to Maximian Herculus. These composed part of the garrison of Rome; and probably they were as brave and as well disciplined, and perhaps as numerous, as the troops of Galerius.

Chap. XXVIII.

P. 68. l. 17. "Maxentius." Mr Gibbon, i. 494. says, "Maxentius considered himself
 " as the legal sovereign of Italy, elected by
 " the Roman senate and people; nor would
 " he

“ he endure the controul of his father, who
 “ arrogantly declared, that by *his* name and
 “ abilities the rash youth had been establisht
 “ ed on the throne.” Thus far Mr Gibbon
 bon, by paraphrasing the narrative of Lactantius, appears to have admitted its authority. But he adds : “ The cause was solemnly
 “ ly pleaded before the pretorian guards,
 “ and those troops, who dreaded the severity
 “ rity of the old Emperor, espoused the
 “ party of Maxentius.” *Here* Mr Gibbon
 departs altogether from Lactantius, but without just cause : for Eutropius, l. x. says,
 “ Herculus tamen Maximianus post hæc in
 “ concione exercitûs filium Maxentium *de-*
 “ *nudare* conatus, seditionem et convicia
 “ militum tulit.” And the anonymous author of the Panegyric addressed to Constantine, says, § 3. “ Ipse denique, qui pater
 “ ejus credebatur, *discissam ab humeris purpu-*
 “ *ram detrahere* conatus, senserat in illud
 “ dedecus sua fata transisse.” The circumstances,

stances, briefly mentioned by those two authors, are related at greater length by Lactantius.

Chap. XXX.

P. 75. l. 9. "Strangled himself." In the original it is, "Et nodum informis leti trabe
"nectit ab altâ." From Virgil's account of the death of Amata, *Æn.* xii. thus translated by Pitt,

"Then on a lofty beam, the matron tied
"The noose dishonest, and obscenely died."

But, in English, no pomp of words can dignify hanging.

The observations of Mosheim on the death of Maximian Herculus are singular. "Constantine," says he, "received the imperial purple and a wife from Herculus,
"and *certainly it was a deed of atrocious
"wickedness* in Constantine to compel Herculus to die by his own hands. [*Atrox
"sine dubio flagitium.*] According to Lactantius,

“ tantius, *d. M. P. c. 30.* the permission of
 “ chusing the mode of his death was grant-
 “ ed to the father-in-law by the son-in-law,
 “ and Herculus used that permission by
 “ strangling himself. How cruel this fa-
 “ vour conferred by a son-in-law on his
 “ father-in-law ! Herculus, I admit, was
 “ guilty of a great crime ; for, *if those things*
 “ *be true* that Lactantius and other histo-
 “ rians relate, he plotted against the life of
 “ Constantine. This, however, does not ef-
 “ face the stains of cruelty and inhumanity
 “ from the character of Constantine. Grant-
 “ ing Herculus to have merited such pu-
 “ nishment, it surely was *a most unworthy*
 “ *part* in Constantine to award it [certè in-
 “ dignissimum] against a father-in-law, vene-
 “ rable for his grey hairs.” *d. Reb. Christ.*
ante Constant. M. p. 953.

The proposition maintained by Mosheim
 is, “ That Constantine ought to have spared
 “ the life of Herculus.” In this proposi-
 tion

tion the guilt of Herculus must be taken for granted; because, if he was an innocent person, there can be no doubt that Constantine did an act of most atrocious wickedness in murdering him. Mosheim, however, attempts to call in question the truth of what Lactantius and other historians have related concerning the guilt of Herculus, or, at least, to render it problematical. This attempt to change the state of the case is not in the style of a just reasoner.

Herculus was guilty of one of the foulest treasons imaginable. He, a private man, plotted to assassinate his Sovereign, and *that* under trust.

That Herculus was *a private man*, will not be disputed, unless it should be held, that an Emperor elevated to that rank, by whatever means, must continue an Emperor, although those means which elevated should have failed to support him, and although he himself

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should

should have chosen to retire to a private station.

That Constantine was the *Sovereign* of Herculus, will be as little disputed; for Herculus was a private man, residing in Gaul, within the dominions of Constantine.

And that the attempt to assassinate was *under trust*, cannot well be controverted; for Herculus, on account of his relation to Constantine, had confidential access at all times to every part of the palace, and was, in the expressive language of antiquity, the *Hospes* of the Emperor.

Now, what were the reasons in morality which ought to have induced Constantine to spare the life of Herculus, and which made it a deed of atrocious wickedness to put him to death?

Mosheim urges *two*: 1st, That Constantine received the imperial purple from Herculus; 2^{dly}, That Herculus gave his daughter Fausta in marriage to Constantine.

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As to the *first*, The truth is, that Constantine owed no debt of gratitude to Her- culius on that account; for it was not by any good offices of his that Constantine obtained sovereign power.

And with respect to the *second*, Had Her- culius given an empire as a portion with Fausta, there would have been a wide range for argument, and it might have been a work of ages to solve the doubts in casuistry arising from that state of the fact. Indeed there are questions of the like nature depending amongst speculative men, and it is probable that they will depend unto the consummation of all things; for there are neither parties nor judges competent to terminate the controversy. But the marriage of Fausta and Constantine was merely a politic alliance, intimating to the world that Her- culius and Constantine were in amity, and not implying that the one conferred, or that the other received a favour.

Whatever obligations Constantine might be supposed to have been under to Hercules on obtaining Fausta in marriage, they were completely cancelled when Hercules endeavoured to persuade Fausta to dissolve that marriage, by conniving at the assassination of her husband.

Thus then, in morality, Constantine was not bound to spare the life of Hercules; and consequently did nothing blame-worthy in putting him to death. It only remains to inquire, whether, in sound policy, he ought to have suffered him to live; and the inquiry will be short. Hercules was a foldier of fortune, advanced to the highest dignity for his talents and services in war, and a man of unbounded liberality to the armies under his command. Such a person must have been exceedingly dangerous in those loose times, a person whom it was not safe to permit to live.

Speculative reasoners may say, “ Why
 “ not

“ not condemn Herculus to perpetual im-
 “ prisonment, or banish him to some re-
 “ mote province ?” But *where* was the se-
 cure prison to which Herculus might have
 been committed, or *what* was that province
 in which he might have been placed, with-
 out any danger of his exciting new disorders,
 and of verifying the proverbial speech of
 “ tyrants returning from exile ?”

Mr Gibbon, i. 496. concludes his account
 of the fate of Maximian Herculus with this
 note. “ Eumenius, in *Paneg. Vet.* vii. 16.
 “ to 21. has undoubtedly represented the
 “ whole affair in the most favourable light
 “ for his Sovereign ; yet even from his par-
 “ tial narrative we may conclude, that *the*
 “ repeated clemency of Constantine, and the
 “ reiterated treasons of Maximian, as they
 “ are described by Lactantius, *d. M. P.* 29.
 “ 30. and copied by the moderns, are *desti-*
 “ tute of any historical foundation ;” that is,
 in other words, *they are pure fictions.*

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The charge is weighty, but the evidence is very light. One circumstance is mentioned through inadvertency; for Lactantius says nothing of “the repeated clemency” of Constantine; so that the question is as to “the reiterated treasons” of his father-in-law.

Different historians relate, that Herculus plotted against the life of Constantine, and that Fausta informed her husband of the plot. They suppose, indeed, that this happened *before* the flight of Herculus to Marseilles, a thing hardly intelligible; for, that Herculus reassumed the imperial purple, seized the treasury, and won over some part of Constantine’s army by his largesses, were facts publicly known, and of which Constantine must have been apprised without any information from his wife Fausta. This of itself shews that the discovery made by Fausta respected something different from open and avowed usurpation. And, if that is the case, the narrative given by Lactantius will
appear

appear probable, and that of the other writers perplexed and obscure.

Eumenius, indeed, makes no mention of the story related in *c. 30. d. M. P.*; but the case of Fausta, who “sacrificed the sentiments of nature to her conjugal duties,” would have been an untoward theme for panegyric; and we may observe, that Eumenius is so far from engaging in any details, that he but slightly touches on the fate of Herculus, and that he even prefaces what he says with an apology for treating of that subject at all. “De quo ego quemadmodum dicam, adhuc fermè dubito — quid faciam igitur, ut tam profunda vulnera suspensâ manu tractem?” § 14.

Lactantius deserves praise, because, like a candid historian, he acknowledges that Constantine commanded Herculus to die; but such praise is not due to Eumenius, who, like a panegyrist, conceals the truth, and endeavours to make his auditors suppose that

Herculus

Herculius died voluntarily. At § 14. he speaks of the “voluntarium exitium” of the old Emperor; and at § 20. he says, that Constantine declined storming Marseilles, because “*illi te intelligimus pepercisse, quem,*
“*si prima copiam habuisset irruptio, eripere*
“*ferro nemo potuisset; ita quod ad pieta-*
“*tem tuam pertinuit, Imperator, et illum,*
“*et omnes quos receperat, reservasti. Si-*
“*bi imputet quisquis uti noluit beneficio tuo,*
“*nec se dignum vitâ judicavit, cum per te*
“*liceret ut viveret. Tu, quod sufficit con-*
“*scientiæ tuæ, etiam non merentibus pe-*
“*percisti, sed ignosce dicto, non omnia po-*
“*tes, Dii te vindicant et invitum.*”

There is another circumstance in the conduct of Constantine, which, although little observed, seems much less justifiable than his treatment of Herculus, and that is, his exposing the poor slave to inevitable death, that the treason of Herculus might become more manifest. *This* was hardly consistent
with

with the rules of morality. There are cases in which a man may be so circumstanced, that his immediate determination *will* be such, as, on *reflection*, he will not be able to reconcile with exact morality; but the circumstances in which Constantine was placed, appear not to have authorized his devoting a slave to death. We ought to ascribe this to the principles of Paganism, by which slaves were considered merely as chattles. Christianity has put it in the power of men to think and act more generously: but Christianity compels no man; and he that is unmerciful and unjust, may be unmerciful and unjust *still*.

Chap. XXXIII.

P. 79. l. 20. "God struck him," &c. Galerius appears to have been of a bad habit of body, produced by intemperance. His disease was a fistulous ulcer, which, either from its position, or in consequence of unskilful management, communicated with some of

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the large veins. It is pitiful to see how injudiciously the case of this wretched Emperor was treated. The surgeons employed the knife without eradicating the ulcer, and, without clearing away the foundation, hastily healed up the surface. The consequences were such as might have been looked for. Lactantius gives a large and scientific account of the symptoms, progress, and crisis of the distemper. It was impossible, in the version, at once to preserve the sense of the original, and to avoid altogether the detail of nauseous circumstances.

Mr Gibbon, i. 497. *mistakes the Emperor's case*; for he says, that “his body — was
“*covered with ulcers.*”

What he adds is more material. “As
“Galerius had *offended* a very zealous and
“powerful party among his subjects, his
“sufferings, instead of exciting their com-
“passion, have been celebrated as the visible
“effects of divine justice.” In consequence
of

of a singular and unexampled arrangement of Mr Gibbon's work, we do not learn till long afterwards, that this *very zealous and powerful party* means *the Christians*, and that the thing which *offended* them was a brutal persecution of *six* years. *He* must require more from man than humanity is capable of, who supposes, that compassion for an inexorable tyrant could have been an early emotion in the minds of men who had endured such tedious and complicated miseries without any cause or provocation.

P. 81. l. 17. "Worms were generated in
 " his body." [*Vermes intus creantur*] Mr
 Gibbon, i. 497. says, "His—body was de-
 " voured by innumerable swarms of *those*
 " *insects*, who have given their name to a
 " most *loathsome disease*." But the words of
 Lactantius give not the least hint concerning
 the *lousy disease*; on the contrary, they are
 unambiguous, and refer to something very
 different.

D. d. 2

There

There is a note at this place, which must not pass unobserved. “ If,” says Mr Gibbon, “ any, *like* the late Dr Jortin, *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, ii. 307.—356. iii. 247.—289. still *delight* in recording the “ wonderful deaths of the persecutors, I “ would recommend to their perusal an admirable passage of Grotius, *Hist.* vii. 332. “ concerning the last illness of Philip II. of “ Spain.” *Gibbon*, i. 497.

This very harsh censure on Dr Jortin, as on a person who *delighted* in recording the misery of his fellow-creatures, might have been spared; for Dr Jortin proposes, with candour, and great decency of language, an opinion which many good and learned men have entertained. “ There is usually,” says he, “ much rashness and presumption in “ pronouncing, that the calamities of sinners “ are particular judgements of God; yet if, “ from sacred and profane, from ancient “ and modern historians, a collection were “ made

“ made of all the cruel persecuting tyrants
 “ who delighted in tormenting their fellow-
 “ creatures, and who died not the common
 “ death of all men, nor were visited after
 “ the visitation of all men, but whose plagues .
 “ were horrible and strange, even a sceptic
 “ would be moved at the evidence, and
 “ would be apt to suspect that it was θεῖόν
 “ τι, that the hand of God was in it.” Such
 is his preamble ; and what follows consists
 of historical collections, of the import of
 which every reader is left to judge for him-
 self.

The passage in Grotius to which Mr Gib-
 bon refers is in these words : “ Claros fa-
 “ pientia, et juris et carminum auctores, a-
 “ liosque, eodem morbo absumptos, memo-
 “ riæ proditum novimus.” That is, “ We
 “ know from history, that celebrated wise
 “ men, writers on law, and poets, and o-
 “ thers also, have died of that distemper
 “ which proved fatal to Philip II.”

There

There is another passage in Grotius on a subject not dissimilar, which Mr Gibbon, probably, overlooked. It is in his Annotations on the Acts of the Apostles, c. xii. v. 23. concerning the death of Herod. [Καὶ γε-
νόμενος σκωληκόβρωτος.] “Ad exemplum An-
“tiochi. Ostendit sic Deus iis qui plus ho-
“mine spirant, homines eos esse, id est,
“vermium escam.” That is, “His death
“was like that of Antiochus. Thus does
“God shew to those who exalt themselves
“above the condition of man, that they are
“men, food for worms.”

Chap. XXXIV.

Having had occasion in a former work to offer some observations on the edict of Galerius, I judge it improper to transcribe them here; and therefore beg leave to refer the reader to *Remains of Christian Antiquity*, v. iii. p. 128.—135.

Chap. XXXVII.

P. 90. l. 13. “Hence famine, from ne-
“glect

“ glect of cultivation.” The MS. has, “ Hinc
 “ fames agris ferentibus.” As this expres-
 sion is singular, Baluze reads, “ Non feren-
 “ tibus.” The emendation proposed by Gale
 is ingenious, but more violent still: “ A-
 “ gricolis non ferentibus.”

P. 91. l. 9. “ Merciful robbers.” “ La-
 “ trones quidem hoc proverbio uti solent,
 “ ut *quibus non auferunt vitam, dedisse se*
 “ dicant.” *Salvianus*, d. Gubernatione Dei,
 l. viii. *in fin.*

Chap. XL.

P. 98. l. 2. “ Military commanders,” &c.
 The MS. has, “ Promoti militari modo in-
 “ structibile *mens es* sagitari prosequuntur.”
 No sense can be drawn from the letters print-
 ed in *Italics*; the rest is intelligible enough,
 if we suppose “ sagitari” to be written for
 “ sagittarii.” What remains to be account-
 ed for is “ *bilemenses* ;” and here, indeed,
 there is full scope for conjecture, and va-
 rious emendations have been proposed. Thus,
 “ *Velites*

“ *Velites et sagittarii*,” BALUZIUS. This is adopted in the Translation as a plausible reading.—“ *Et Viennenses sagittarii*,” VOSSIUS.—“ *Telis et sagittis* prosequuntur,” GRÆVIUS.—“ *Collinientes sagittas*,” GALE.—“ *Præcedunt militari modo instructi, equites et sagittarii prosequuntur*,” ABBAS A S. HILARIO.—“ *Instructi pilo et ense*,” BAULDRI. This, by the way, agrees not with the Latin idiom, which would require *pilis et ensibus*, though “ *armés de lance et d’épée*” may be good French.—“ *Ut velites et sagittarii*,” or “ *ut milites et sagittarii*,” CUPERUS.—“ *Vigiles et sagittarii*,” COLUMBUS.

Chap. XLIII.

P. 101. l. 15. “ *As if to revenge the death of his father.*” [*Quasi necem patris sui vindicaturus.*] An expression precisely similar occurs in Zosimus, ii. [*προσποινοῦσάμενος ἐπὶ τῷ θανάτῳ τῆ πατρὸς ὀδυῖσθαι.*] “ *Affecting*

“fecting to be grieved on account of the
“death of his father.”

Chap. XLIV.

P. 102. l. 8. “Because the soothsayers
“had foretold,” &c. To the same purpose
a Panegyrist speaks. “Stultum et nequam
“animal nusquam extra parietes egredi au-
“debat. Ita enim aut *prodigiis* aut metûs
“sui præfagiis monebatur.” *Incert. Paneg.*
Constant. Aug. § 14.

P. 102. l. 16. “The troops of Maxen-
“tius prevailed.” [Maxentiani milites præ-
valebant.] This is singular; it is not re-
corded by any other historian extant, not
even by Zosimus. There is a passage in
Photius, *Biblioth.* p. 1408. quoted from *Pol-
itica SS. Patrum*, which alludes to the cir-
cumstance recorded by Lactantius. συμπλα-
κεῖς μάχῃ, τὰ πρῶτα μὲν ἐγγύς γινέσθαι τῷ λα-
βεῖν τὸ ἥλλον. “Having been engaged in
“battle, he was, at first, well nigh being
“worsted.” Thus the check which Con-

stantine received is spoken of by Christian historians, but never by the Heathen: No small evidence of candour on the one part, and of carelessness on the other.

P. 103. l. 4. “The *fifth* year of his reign
 “ was drawing to an end.” [Quinquennalia terminabantur.] Here there is a difficulty. The anonymous Panegyrist says, “Sed
 “ divina mens et ipsius urbis æterna Majestas
 “ nefario homini eripuerit consilium.
 “ Ut ex inveterato illo torpore ac fœdissimis
 “ latebris subito prorumperet, et con-
 “ sumpto per desidias senio, [l. sexennio],
 “ ipsum diem natalis sui ultimâ cæde signaret,
 “ ne *septennarium illum numerum sacrum*
 “ *et religiosum* inchoando violaret.” *Incert. Paneg. Constant. Aug.* § 16. If, as some suppose, the *quinquennalia*, which began to be celebrated at the end of the *fifth* year, or at the beginning of the *sixth*, were continued occasionally throughout the *sixth* year, the difficulty will be removed; and if the *quinquennalia*

quennalia and the *vicennalia* were of the nature of a *jubilee*, this hypothesis of the continuation of the festival is not unlikely. The subject, however, merits not a minute inquiry; for, were it examined and cleared to the bottom, it would only serve to ascertain the moment of the accession of Maxentius to the sovereignty of Rome.

P. 103. l. 7. "*The heavenly sign.*" [Cœleste signum Dei.] If, by this circumlocution, nothing is meant but "the mark or "figure of a cross," and if it singly relates to the dream of Constantine, we must admit, that the story of the luminous appearance in the heavens has no aid from the earliest contemporary historian. But, since "cœleste "signum Dei" may be considered as a very singular circumlocution in that age for "the "mark" or "figure of a cross," we might, perhaps, suppose, that it meant "the luminous appearance in the heavens," so fully described by Eusebius and other writers, and

that Lactantius, alluding to a thing, which, if it existed at all, must have been seen by thousands, called it the *cœleste signum Dei*, and mentioned the dream of Constantine as the sequel of that heavenly appearance.

P. 103. l. 18. “ And firmly maintained
 “ their ground.” [Neque his fuga nota, neque illis.] From Virgil, *Æneid.* x. 757. A Panegyrist, speaking of the prætorian bands, says, “ Latrocinii primi auctores—desperatâ
 “ veniâ, locum quem pugnæ sumpserunt, texere corporibus.” *Incert. Paneg. Constant. Aug.* § 17. This description, for elegance and strength of language, is not unworthy even of the Augustan age.

P. 103. l. 19. “ A sedition arose at Rome,” &c. The passage is thus paraphrased by Mr Gibbon, i. 509. “ Shame at length supplied
 “ the place of courage, and forced him to
 “ take the field. He was unable to sustain
 “ the contempt of the Roman people; the
 “ circus resounded with their indignant
 “ clamours,

“clamours, *and they tumultuously besieged*
 “*the gates of the palace*, reproaching the
 “puffillanimity of their indolent sovereign,
 “and celebrating the heroic spirit of Con-
 “stantine.” That “the Roman people tu-
 “multuously *besieged the gates of the pa-*
 “*lace,*” is a circumstance not mentioned by
 Lactantius, and it does not appear from
 what author Mr Gibbon learnt it. The
 anonymous Panegyrist says, that “Maxen-
 “tius, disturbed by fearful omens, *removed*
 “*from the palace two days before the battle,*
 “and betook himself to a private habitation
 “in Rome.”

P. 104. l. 3. “Constantine cannot be o-
 “vercome.” [Constantinum vinci non pos-
 se.] Heuman imagines the sentence to be
 imperfect, and, for supplying it, adds “*sine*
 “*eo,*” as if the voice of the people had
 been, “that Constantine could not be van-
 “quished unless by Maxentius in person.”
 And in support of this conjecture, it has been
 urged

urged by a very able critic, “ that in no
 “ other way can we account for this change
 “ of conduct in Maxentius, who, after ha-
 “ ving resolved to remain in the city, now
 “ issued forth, and placed himself at the
 “ head of his army.”

But how could Maxentius have been alarmed at an omen so favourable as the voice of the Roman people, proclaiming that *his* presence was necessary to vanquish Constantine, and saying in effect, “ in te uno stat
 “ *salus reipublicæ* ?” On the contrary, when the people cried, that “ Constantine was invincible,” it was not only an unfavourable omen, but a token also of disaffection and revolt ; and accordingly the historian adds, that Maxentius was dismayed at it, [*qua voce consternatus,*] and again had recourse to divination. The uncertainty and hesitation of a superstitious mind may be discerned in every circumstance of his behaviour.

P. 104. l. 11. "The bridge in his rear was
 "broken down." Not the *pons Milvius*,
 but a temporary bridge of boats which had
 been constructed for facilitating the passage
 of the army. *Victor*. Epitome, p. 221. *Politia Patrum*, ap. Photium, p. 1408.

P. 105. l. 5. "*Maximus*." It is probable,
 that the senate then decreed the title to Con-
 stantine, which appears at this day on the
 triumphal arch erected in honour of him.

IMP. CÆS. FL. CONSTANTINO. MAXIMO.

P. F. AUGUSTO. S. P. Q. R.

QUOD. INSTINCTUS. DIVINITATIS. MEN-
 TIS. MAGNITUDE. CUM. EXERCITU. SUO.
 TAM. DE. TYRANNO. QUAM. DE. OMNI. E-
 JUS. FACTIONE. UNO. TEMPORE. JUSTIS.
 REMPUBLICAM. ULTUS. EST. ARMIS. AR-
 CUM. TRIUMPHIS. INSIGNEM. DICAVIT.

Chap. XLVI.

P. 108. l. 10. "An angel." Lactantius
 relates this story, as if Licinius had been fa-
 voured with a heavenly vision, and had ac-
 tually

ually received the form [of prayer from an angel. It will be remarked, however, that the story rests altogether on the evidence of Licinius himself, who, notwithstanding any outward professions, was neither a Christian, nor the friend of Christianity, and was, besides, a worthless and profligate man.

P. 108. l. 20. "One of his secretaries." Probably because he himself could not write. Victor, *Epitome*, p. 224. says Licinius was "infestus literis; quas, *per inscitiam immo-*
" *dicam*, virus ac pestem publicam nomina-
" bat, præcipuè forensem industriam." Wicked tyrants have generally honoured the law and its professors with marks of contempt and abhorrence.

P. 108. l. 20. "Dictated these words." Dr Jortin says, *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, iii. 6. "Licinius, if we may believe
" the writer *d. M. P.* was instructed by an
" angel how to obtain the victory over Ma-
" ximinus. This seems to have been a mi-
" litary

“ litary stratagem of Licinius, to *regain* the
 “ favour of the Christians, and to animate
 “ his soldiers.”

We have no reason to suppose that any divine communications would have been bestowed on Licinius, and we have much reason to doubt of the heavenly original of this prayer. It is replete with tautology, and it more resembles the acclamations of a Roman senate in the decline of the empire, than a form of prayer communicated by an angel. Besides, the prayer is not Christian;—it is conceived in ambiguous words; so that Pagans and professors of Christianity might have joined in it. The expression, “*salutem nostram tibi commendamus,*” pronounced by a Pagan, would mean, “to thee we recommend our safety,” but by a Christian, “to thee we commit our salvation.” It was impossible to preserve this ambiguity in an English version. That Licinius, as Dr Jortin says, used a stratagem to animate his

F f

soldiers,

foldiers, is probable; but there is no evidence that he used it to *regain* the favour of his Christian foldiers: for we know not *what* Christians Licinius had in his army, or what need he had of *regaining* their favour. Besides, on this hypothesis, a prayer in Christian style, while it pleased one part of his army, would have disgusted the other.

P. 110. l. 14. “The host, doomed to
“speedy destruction,” &c. [Audit acies peritura precantium murmur.] The translation, notwithstanding the aid from Milton, falls far short of the elegance and energy of the original. The mixture of anapæsts must please every one who can judge of the propriety of cadence; and the words themselves are so forcible and descriptive, that few scholars of strong feelings will be able to read them without an emotion of horror.

Chap. XLVIII.

P. 115. l. 2. “The Supreme Divinity.”
They seem to profess a kind of Pagan Deism,
such

such as Constantius held, that is, the belief of *one supreme God*, with many inferior divinities under him.

Chap. XLIX.

P. 119. l. 11. “As those are wont who
 “believe that they eat and drink for the last
 “time.” This passage is beautifully illustrated by Lactantius himself, *Inst.* vii. c. ult.
 “Quantò quisque annis in senectutem ver-
 “gentibus, appropinquare cernit illum diem,
 “quo fit ei ex hac vita demigrandum, cogi-
 “tet quàm purus abscedat, quàm innocens
 “ad judicium veniat; non ut faciunt qui-
 “dam cœcis mentibus nixi, qui, jam defi-
 “cientibus corporis viribus, in hoc admo-
 “nentur ultimæ necessitatis, ut cupidius et
 “ardentius hauriendis libidinibus intendant.”

Mr Gibbon observes, that Zosimus mentions the death of Maximin Daia as an ordinary event; but that Lactantius expatiates on it, and ascribes it to the miraculous interposition of Heaven.—Zosimus was a Hea-

then, and Lactantius was a Christian; and this might account for the silence of the one, as well as for the detail which the other gives, of the circumstances attending the death of Daia. It is possible, however, that Zosimus knew nothing of those circumstances; for the historian, who says, that Maximian Herculus died a natural death at Tarsus, might well be supposed ignorant of the manner in which Maximin Daia died; and nothing can be learnt from the testimony of one who could not distinguish an Emperor of the West from an Emperor of the East, because there was something similar in the sound of their names.

Other Christian writers relate the catastrophe of Daia nearly as Lactantius does. See *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* ix. 10. and *Chrysostom. d. Sancto Babyla*. Neither is there any Heathen writer that contradicts their relation. And, indeed, if the joint testimony of Lactantius and Eusebius, the only two historians who
lived

lived in that age, be not sufficient to establish the truth of facts so public as the disease and death of the Emperor of the East, what is there that remains, unless to set aside the testimony of all Christians, as *sacri et intestabiles*, to abandon ourselves to scepticism, and to declare, at once, that we know not what to believe !

P. 120. l. 14. “ Christ to have mercy upon him.” We learn from Eusebius, *H. E.* ix. 10. that Daia, before his last illness, ceased from persecuting the Christians, and even issued an edict very favourable for them. When to those circumstances we add, his earnest, though late, applications to the mercies of Christ, may we not hope that his repentance was sincere ?

Victor, *Epitome*, p. 222. attempts to place the character of Daia in a less odious light than our writers have done. “ Ortu quidè m atque instituto pastorali, verùm sapientissimi cujusque ac litteratorum cultor,
“ ingenio

“ ingenio quieto, vini avidior, quo ebr̄ius,
 “ quædam corruptâ mente aspera jubebat :
 “ qui, cùm pigeret factum, differri quæ præ-
 “ cepisset, in tempus sobrium ac matutinum
 “ statuit.” Here Victor seems to admit, that
 the manners of Daia were rude, suitable to
 his birth and education, that he was a con-
 firmed drunkard, and was wont in his drun-
 keness to issue cruel orders ; but the histo-
 rian adds, that, sensible of his outrageous
 disposition at those seasons, which constantly
 recurred, he enjoined his ministers to delay
 executing his commands until the more so-
 ber hours of the morning. And to the same
 purpose Eusebius speaks, *H. E.* viii. 14.

With respect to the *ingenium quietum*, it is
 probable, that the phrase implies his slug-
 gishness and inactivity ; and the undistin-
 guishing veneration that he shewed to *every*
 wise and learned man, may relate to his ap-
 pointment of so many additional priests, and
 superintendants in religious matters through-

out the different cities and provinces of his dominions : but, more probably, it relates to the exceeding favour that he shewed to soothsayers, and to all who professed knowledge in magical arts. See *Euseb. H. E. viii. 14.*

Mr Gibbon, i. 697. has elegantly paraphrased the account which Eusebius gives of the manners of Maximin Daia. “ The Emperor was devoted to the worship of the gods, to the study of magic, and the belief of oracles. The *prophets* or philosophers, whom he revered as the favourites of Heaven, were frequently raised to the government of provinces, and admitted into his most secret councils. They easily convinced him, that the Christians had been indebted for their *victories* to their regular discipline, and that *the weakness of Polytheism* had principally flowed from a want of union and subordination among the ministers of religion. A system of government was therefore instituted, which
“ was

“ was evidently copied from the policy of
 “ the church.”

Like most paraphrafts, Mr Gibbon is apt to lose fight of the original. For two or three lines he is no less exact than elegant; but at the word *prophet* he disengages himself from a careful imitation of Eusebius. It is true, that Eusebius, *H. E.* ix. 10. applies the word *prophets* to the counsellors of Daia; but it is equally true that, *H. E.* viii. 14. he gives the just appellation of *cheats* to those very *prophets*. The meaning of Eusebius cannot be misunderstood, when the genuine Greek sense of the word *προφήτης* is attended to. Mr Gibbon well knows, that it signifies “ an interpreter of oracles, a sooth-
 “ fayer, an *haruspex*,” and that it has no relation to the English sense of the word *prophet*; and therefore it must have been from inadvertency alone, that he expressed the *sound* without the *sense* of Eusebius.

It seems that those *prophets* of Daia “ ea-
 “ sily

“ sily convinced him, that the victories of the
 “ Christians were to be ascribed to regular
 “ discipline, and that *the weakness of Poly-*
 “ *theism flowed from a want of union and*
 “ *subordination* in the ministers of religion.”

If such was the case, the *ingenium quietum* of Daia, his dull sottish disposition, must have led him to be easily convinced indeed ! The assertions of his philosophers were barefaced sophisms, enough to have disgusted any man of moderate understanding. By *victories of the Christians*, I presume that they meant perseverance in the faith under every discouragement, and amidst the most exquisite tortures ; a perseverance not connected with subordination in offices or the other externals of religion : and if the philosophers assured Daia, that *the weakness of Polytheism flowed from a want of union and subordination in the ministers of religion*, they spake against their own conviction, and from views of private emolument ; for they well knew

that Polytheism, a mere fable, originated in the ignorance of men, and grew up with their prejudices ; that it had attempted to maintain itself by the *union* of worshippers, how different soever in opinions and rites ; and that *the subordination of offices*, the appointment of *Antistites* and *Principes Sacerdotum*, and even the authority of an imperial *Pontifex Maximus*, had been unable to support a fabric not founded on conscience and judgement.

Chap. L.

P. 121. l. 1. "Licinius." Lactantius candidly relates the many cruelties of Licinius. To have censured them would have been dangerous, and it is possible that he did not see their enormity in so clear a light, as he would have done had Licinius professed himself a Pagan and a persecutor ; for the bias of the human mind to benefactors is very strong. After Licinius became a persecutor, Lactantius discovered him to have been a
bad

bad man : for to him it is probable that the following passage alludes. “ Quidam pro-
 “ bitate fictâ viam sibi ad potentiam mu-
 “ niunt, faciuntque multa, quæ boni solent,
 “ eo quidem promptius, quòd fallendi gra-
 “ tiâ faciunt, utinamque tam facile esset
 “ præstare, quàm facile est simulare bonita-
 “ tem ! Sed ii cùm esse cœperint propofiti
 “ ac voti fui compotes, et *summum potentia*
 “ *gradum* ceperint, tum verò, simulatione
 “ depositâ, mores suos detegunt, rapiunt-
 “ que omnia, et violant, et vexant, *eosque ip-*
 “ *fos bonos, quorum causam susceperant, in-*
 “ *sequuntur.*” *Inst.* vi. 6.

Chap. LII.

P. 123. l. 17. “ I relate all those things
 “ on the authority of well-informed per-
 “ sons,” &c. The MS. has, “ Quæ omnia
 “ secundum *finem scienti enim* loquor, ita
 “ ut gesta sunt mandanda literis credidi.”

Lenglet du Fresnoy attempts to vindicate the reading in the MS. He observes, that “ se-
 “ cundùm

“ cundùm finem” means, “ at a time when
 “ the end of the world is approaching.”
 But this interpretation is excessively strained,
 and, to say the truth, is hardly consistent
 either with sense or the import of the
 words. Some read “ secundùm *fidem*, *sci-*
 “ *enti enim loquor*,” &c. At first sight this
 emendation is specious; but it may be ob-
 jected, that the historian could not with pro-
 priety appeal to the personal knowledge of
 Donatus for the truth of the whole narra-
 tive, because many of the events which it
 contains happened during his long imprison-
 ment. “ Secundùm *fidem scientium loquor*,”
 appears to be the true reading; and we may
 reasonably conjecture, that Lactantius rela-
 ted many of the circumstances in his narra-
 tive on the authority of Constantine himself.

F I N I S.

